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RASHOMON

FINAL PROJECT, OPTION II
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
MASTER OF ARTS

BY
ALISON LAURIO

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

APRIL, 1983

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INTRODUCTION

This document is offered in partial fulfillment of requirements for a Master of Arts Degree in Dramatic Arts. It is a record of the production of Rashomon, which was presented in the Studio Theatre of the University of Nebraska at Omaha on January 27, 28, 29, 30 and February 4, 5, and 6 of 1983.

Rashomon, the play (1959), is based on two short stories which were written around 1915 by a Japanese student, Ryunosuke Akutagawa. The film, Rashomon (1950), also based on Akutagawa's work, was written and directed by Akira Kurosawa. This document will include development of the tale from its original short story form through its use in the movie and its form for the stage. Similarities and differences in the three genres will be discussed. Also included are analyses of the plot and characters; a log of decisions and events concerning the production, forming a history of the production itself; and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the production.

The tale of Rashomon is a puzzle because it questions "what is truth?" Howard Hibbett, in his introduction to Rashomon and Other Stories, states:

"In a Grove" converts an old melodramatic tale into a series of conflicting statements which undermine our prosaic

confidence in distinguishing between subjective and objective truth and fiction.

This question is of contemporary significance, for although the historical setting is far away and long ago, it could happen today on the streets of one of our cities. The elusiveness of truth is a component in the magnetic appeal of Rashomon. The play succeeds because it questions wherein lies the truth.

I wish to thank my advisor, Dr. Julia Curtis; my committee, Dean Margaret Gesseman and Dr. Roger Foltz; and the Faculty of the Department of Dramatic Arts, whose support and concern were of invaluable assistance in the development of this project. I also wish to thank a marvelous group of actors, without whom this play could not have been presented.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND ON THE TALE OF RASHOMON

Ryunosuke Akutagawa and His Short Story, Rashomon

The history and uses of the tale of Rashomon are nearly as complex as the meaning of the story itself. The short story Rashomon was written by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, and first published in 1915 in Shin Shichō (New Thought), a literary magazine to which Akutagawa contributed while an undergraduate at the Imperial University of Tokyo.¹ Akutagawa's footnote, consistently published with the short story, explains the title and the setting:

The "Rashōmon" was the largest gate in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. It was 106 feet wide and 26 feet deep, and was topped with a ridgepole; its stone wall rose 75 feet high. This gate was constructed in 789, and in 794 the capital of Japan was transferred to Kyoto. With the decline of Kyoto in the twelfth century, the gate fell into disrepair, cracking and crumbling in many places.

"It was a chilly evening. A samurai's servant stood under the Rashomon, waiting for a break in the rain." After these opening sentences, Akutagawa describes in great detail the appearance and feeling of the gate; then he reverts to the servant. The servant has been discharged from his job because of the economic decline in the city and in his master's fortunes. He is now at a loss as to where to go and what to do. He debates over his future, wavering

between the life of a thief and an honest life. Since choosing the honest path would surely result in death by starvation, his mind keeps returning to thievery as the only possible means of staying alive. He decides to spend the night there. Ascending the stairs, he becomes aware that someone else is in the tower. Creeping to the top, he finds several corpses with a live woman in their midst. Her "ghoulish form" is bent over a corpse, pulling out the long black hairs one by one. In their encounter, he steals her clothing, justifying his robbery by saying he would starve. He then rushes out and away, knowing which path he has chosen.

A second short story by Akutagawa which is used as a source for the play is titled In A Grove, published around 1919. This relates the testimonies and confessions of the seven persons directly and indirectly involved in the death of a samurai: "The Testimony of a Woodcutter Questioned by a High Police Commissioner"; "The Testimony of a Traveling Buddhist Priest Questioned by a High Police Commissioner"; "The Testimony of a Policeman Questioned by a High Police Commissioner"; "The Testimony of an Old Woman Questioned by a High Police Commissioner"; "Tajomaru's Confession"; "The Confession of a Woman Who Has Come to the Shimizu Temple"; and "The Story of the Murdered Man, as Told Through a Medium".

Each character's tale is told as a report of what was seen or experienced. The Woodcutter states how and where he found the body of the murdered Samurai. The Priest states when and where he saw the Samurai and his Wife in the forest. The Policeman states how

and where he arrested Tajomaru. The Old Woman, the Mother of the Samurai's Wife, identifies the body and describes her daughter. Tajomaru, the local bandit, confesses to the murder. He gives a detailed description of meeting the couple on the road, luring the man away and tying him up, violating his Wife, and killing the Samurai during a sword fight over the woman, who claims she will be the wife of the survivor. The Woman, who has taken refuge at a temple, is the Wife of the murdered Samurai. She describes what happened after the Bandit forced her to yield to him and then left her. Seeing the cold contempt and hate in her Husband's eyes, she tells him they both must die; so she kills him. She then tries to kill herself, but is unsuccessful. The Husband tells of his jealousy and anger because his Wife agreed to go away with the Bandit after he violated her. As they begin to leave, however, she tells the Bandit to kill her Husband. Even the Bandit is shocked at this, and throws her down, asking the Husband if she should be killed or saved. After she runs away, the Bandit cuts the Husband free and flees. The Husband then kills himself; as he is dying, someone creeps up to him and withdraws the sword from his breast.

Each testimony in this short story is told in a first-person narrative. Each view is presented as fact from that character's point of view; and each character believes what he says to be truth. In production, we worked to make each character's confession as convincing as possible. The character relating the story believes that what he saw and experienced is true, and the other

characters involved support that version in an almost expressionistic way. It is only from seeing the conflicting versions in sequence that the audience begins to question the veracity of each character's testimony or the possibility of discerning the truth.

Howard Hibbett, in his introduction to the book Rashomon and Other Stories, says that in In A Grove, as well as other stories by Akutagawa, "confession itself may be false."² Hibbett says:

"In A Grove" converts an old melodramatic tale into a series of conflicting statements which undermine our prosaic confidence in distinguishing between subjective and objective truth and fiction.³

As a writer, Akutagawa was criticised for breaking from the conventions of his day. Akutagawa was born in 1892, and lived his life in Tokyo. He began his writing career while a student, and wrote over 100 short stories. At the Imperial University of Tokyo, he studied under the famous Japanese writer, Natsume Soseki, whose contention that "happiness exists only in contemplation and imagination" fascinated Akutagawa.⁴ At this time, Akutagawa's contemporaries were absorbed with proletarian pieces, attempting to advance workers' rights. It was inevitable that Akutagawa was heavily criticised by these contemporaries for his beliefs "that a man's own will triumphs over destiny to determine the degree of a man's happiness."⁵

In Akutagawa's stories, he has eliminated all but what was vital to the structure and atmosphere of the story. Often using traditional stories or incidents, he uses words poetically, showing

what Hibbett describes as his "feelings for shapes and flavors of words and ambiguities."⁶ He was a master of tone, and his word choices enable the reader to feel as if he were there where the story is taking place. The reader can smell the fragrance of the cherry blossoms along with the odor of burning flesh. Hibbett claims his vivid descriptions of bizarre incidents are successful because he maintains an aesthetic distance through detachment. "It suited his taste to play the illusionist who leaves his audience staring blankly into a mirror."⁷

With a flavor of the Zen taste for paradox, Akutagawa successfully dramatizes the complexities of human psychology, showing clearly that the balance between illusion and reality is precarious.⁸ Akutagawa was evidently unable to sustain his own philosophy in his personal life, for he took an overdose of sleeping pills and ended his life in 1927 at the age of 35.

Akira Kurosawa and the Movie, Rashomon

The second step in the tale of Rashomon is the movie, which was adapted for the screen by Akira Kurosawa. His first scenario was completed in 1948, but the picture was cancelled because of lack of financial backing. When the Daiei Motion Picture Company decided to finance Kurosawa's work, the script was lengthened; and the movie, Rashomon, was released in 1950.

Masaichi Nagata was the head of Daiei, and he had fought Kurosawa every step of the way. He even walked out on the first screening. The picture premiered August 25, 1950, in Tokyo; and when it began to win prizes abroad, Nagata became "very fond of telling the press how little he understood his film."⁹

In 1951, Rashomon won Grand Prize at the Venice Film Festival. In the following year, 1952, it won the Academy Award for the Best Foreign Film. This was the year it was released by RKO Radio Pictures, Inc. with English subtitles.

Kurosawa used the title, the description of the ruined gate, and the atmosphere of complete desolation from Akutagawa's short story Rashomon. Like the story, the film begins at the Rashomon Gate in the rain. This setting forms a frame for the action in the Court and the Forest, as three characters discuss the events that have taken place in a local Magistrate's Court. Using the testi-

monies from Akutagawa's In A Grove, Kurosawa skips back and forth from the Gate to the different versions described in those testimonies. He has placed the Woodcutter and the Priest at the Gate, and has added a character, the Commoner. This man, as the only uninvolved person, asks questions which lead to the unfolding of the tale.

Kurosawa added another element. In the third act, a baby that has been abandoned at the Rashomon Gate is found. The Commoner picks it up and takes its clothes, an act which horrifies the Priest and the Woodcutter. When the Woodcutter picks up the child and says he will take it home, the Priest claims his faith in humanity has been restored. With this baby, Kurosawa adds an element of hope at the end.

Akira Kurosawa was born in Tokyo in 1910. He began working in the film industry in 1936, becoming a full-fledged director in 1943. For over twenty years, he was a prolific producer of films, writing or co-authoring nearly all the scripts he directed.¹⁰

Rashomon, his most famous film, is considered to be the film that catapulted the Japanese film industry into international prominence. His most acclaimed and popular works include: Sanshiro Sugata, 1943; No Regrets For Our Youth, 1946; One Wonderful Sunday, 1947; Rashomon, 1950; Ikiru, 1952; The Seven Samurai, 1954; The Throne of Blood, 1957; High and Low, 1963; and Red Beard, 1965. His last film, Dersu Uzala, was made in 1975. Kurosawa is still making his home in Tokyo.

CHAPTER II

PLAYWRIGHTS FAY AND MICHAEL KANIN

Rashomon Adapted for the Stage

The two-act play Rashomon was written by Fay and Michael Kanin and first produced at The Music Box Theatre in New York on January 27, 1959. The Kanins have used elements from both the short stories and the movie. The script states that it is "based on stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa." It appears that the Kanins are also indebted to Kurosawa, the film director, for the format and the addition of the baby and the third character at the Gate.

The play uses the format set up in the movie, beginning at the crumbling Rashomon Gate as the Woodcutter runs through the rain to find the disillusioned Priest, who has his mind set on leaving the city. A third character appears, and through his urgings, the story unfolds. The scenes flow back and forth as the witnesses in Court are interrupted so that the same characters may shift to the Forest where they act out the crimes. Like the movie, the play concludes with the appearance of a baby; but here the similarities between the play and the movie end.

Where Kurosawa has made the third character at the Gate the

Commoner, the Kanins have taken Akutagawa's female wigmaker character, and turned her into a male Wigmaker. In the film, the Commoner takes the clothes from the baby and leaves. When the Woodcutter states he will take the child home, the Priest claims to have regained his faith in humanity, and the movie ends with the Woodcutter's exit.

The play uses the final scene to add dimension to all three Gate characters. The Wigmaker takes the baby's blanket, but before he leaves, tells the Woodcutter about a painting he once saw. This picture shows the inescapability of the evil and the good aspects of life, and the Wigmaker utters his belief that life is too short to waste time in arguing over what is right and wrong. The Wigmaker's comments on life draw out a confession from the Woodcutter, who knows he was wrong in taking the sword. But he adds that his children are sometimes hungry and cold, and "A silver-handled sword can dry a lot of tears."

This confession is motivated by love; and the Priest, comparing it to the scenarios of lust and greed he witnessed in the court the day before, is moved. He is able to forgive not only the Woodcutter, but himself. The Priest emphasizes the playwrights' message that all people are human through his newly realized self-awareness. This is proven by his affirmation to return to the Temple and ask the people for their forgiveness. This conscious and positive action which is motivated by love and understanding closes the play with hope.

Biographical Information

Fay Mitchell was born in 1915 in New York City, the daughter of a department store manager. She graduated in 1933 from the Free Academy in Elmira, New York, and attended Elmira College from 1933-1936. Graduating from the University of Southern California in 1937, she remained in California, working as an actress. On April 7, 1940, she married Michael Kanin.

Fay Kanin's first single work was the play Goodbye My Fancy, which was produced in New York on November 17, 1948. Her other plays, written with her husband, are: His and Hers, 1954; Rashomon, 1959; and The Gay Life, 1961.

With her husband, she wrote the screenplays for Sunday Punch, 1942; My Pal Gus, 1952; Rhapsody, 1954; The Opposite Sex, 1956; Teacher's Pet, 1958; The Right Approach, 1961; and The Swordsman of Siena, 1962. The Kanins were nominated for the Academy Award for best original story and screenplay for Teacher's Pet; which was also nominated for the Screen Writer's Guild's award for best-written American comedy.

Fay Kanin began writing television screenplays in the 1970's. These works include: The Source, 1972; Tell Me Where It Hurts, 1974; Friendly Fire, 1976; and Hustling, 1978.

In 1979 she was named President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The second woman to attain that honor, she is still the President.

Michael Kanin was born in Rochester, New York, on February 1, 1910. He attended Art Students League in 1927, and the New York School of Design in 1928. He worked as a commercial and scenic artist, musician and entertainer before he began writing. In addition to his works with his wife, he wrote the play M'Lord and Lady with Ben Starr in 1974, and wrote the following screenplays: Panama Lady, 1939; They Made Her a Spy, 1939; Anne of Windy Poplars, 1940; The Cross of Lorraine, 1943; Centennial Summer, 1946; Honeymoon, 1947; When I Grow Up, 1951; The Outrage, 1964; and How to Commit Marriage, 1969. With Ring Lardner, Jr., he co-authored Woman of the Year in 1942, for which they won the Academy Award for best original screenplay.

Michael Kanin belongs to the American Theatre Association, and is active in the American College Theatre Festival.

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1959

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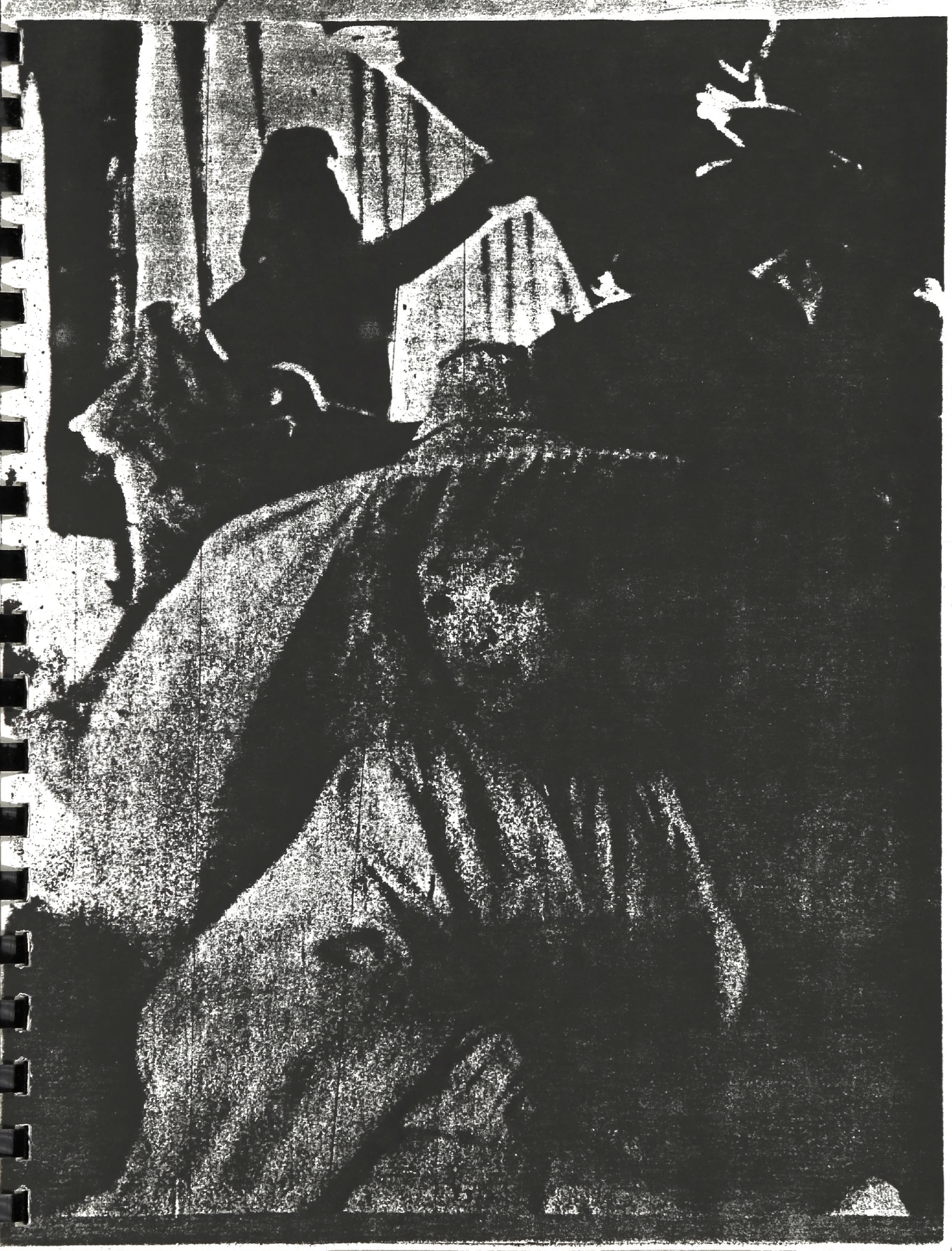
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Above: *The Medium* in the new stage version of *Rashomon* is represented in this painting by Oliver Messel, done expressly for THEATRE ARTS. Messel designed the scenery and costumes for the production.

CHAPTER III

PLAY ANALYSES

Plot Analysis

The plot of the play is a result of an incident. A Samurai and his Wife travel through a forest outside of Kyoto. The Samurai is found dead, and the local Magistrate holds an inquiry. The action of the play revolves around three characters discussing the events of the inquiry after seeking the shelter of the Rashomon Gate during a storm. What happened to bring about the Samurai's death is told to the audience through a series of flashbacks, and three different accounts of the incident are presented: those of the Bandit, the Wife, and the Samurai who speaks from the dead through a Medium. Then the Woodcutter, who has taken refuge at the gate during the storm, admits that he witnesses what happened, even though he did not tell the whole truth to the Magistrate's Court. His story is then recounted, the fourth, and a very different version of the same incident.

The action in the script moves through the Gate characters, whose scenes form the frame for the flashbacks of the retelling of the testimonies in the Court and the reenactment of the versions in the Forest. Rashomon begins and ends at the Gate, and those scenes are important because they state reality, they form the action, and they contain the meaning of the play.

There are three Gate scenes in each act, and the play begins and ends at the Gate. The first and the last scenes are long, and the four middle scenes are short. The first scene provides exposition, explaining why the Priest and the Woodcutter both testified in Court: the Priest saw the couple as they entered the woods, and the Woodcutter found the Samurai's body. Here the audience learns of the incident and that the Magistrate is trying to find out what actually happened. The Priest's depression and lack of confidence is explained, and the Woodcutter is seen as concerned, but nervous and edgy. This scene makes a smooth transition to the first Court scene, as a simultaneous line is spoken by the Woodcutter and the Deputy.

The next three scenes at the Gate are also lead-ins to the Court, and the fifth Gate scene begins the Woodcutter's version of what he witnessed. The final scene summarizes the meaning of the play. The Priest is devastated by the fact the Woodcutter did not speak out in Court and "unravel this whole web of mystery and deceit." When he learns of what the Woodcutter saw, he is totally defeated. He is on the verge of leaving when the baby is discovered and the Wigmaker steals the blanket from the child. The contrived situation of a baby, symbolizing new life, makes the end of the play a little shaky, but allows the Woodcutter to explain that "a silver-handled sword can dry a lot of tears." It is at this point that the Priest comes to a new understanding of humankind. He sees that all men, including himself, have faults

and frailties, but also have redeeming virtues.

Four characters have witnessed the same incident and come away with four different views of what actually happened. Each view is truth to that character. The relativity of "truth" is that aspect of the play which gives it contemporary significance. Stories of traffic accidents are common, where the involved parties all saw something different happen. Although the historical setting is far away and long ago, it could happen today on the streets of one of our cities.

It is the baby, the contrived feature in the end of the play, that received negative criticism in the original production on Broadway. Walter Kerr, New York Herald Tribune, wrote "It is perhaps essential to the philosophy of 'Rashomon' that a play of considerable size and splendor should shrivel to a finish."¹¹ In his New Yorker review, Kenneth Tynan claims the end is sentimental and irrelevant to the puzzle.¹²

The play was generally well received, though, and most criticisms focused on the question of truth which arises in the play, and on the theatricality of the script. Other review headlines read: "'Rashomon' Examines Truth From All Sides"¹³; "A Search For Truth"¹⁴; "'Rashomon' Is Gripping Play"¹⁵.

Peter Glenville, the director of the production on Broadway, said in an interview with Theatre Arts, that he enjoyed the film Rashomon, but was skeptical when he heard it had been adapted for the stage because he remembered the film too well. After he read the Kanins' script, though, he said he realized "that they

had used the central situation of the stories and had retold them in terms that were essentially theatrical."¹⁶

The strikingly theatrical features in the play grow out of the flashback within a flashback arrangement of the Court and Forest episodes. The accounts of the Bandit, the Wife and the Husband all begin in the Court. In the first two, those characters move into the Forest with a lighting crossfade. In the Husband's rendition, the Medium begins, and remains visible for the duration of his story. Tajomaru moves back and forth from the Court to the Forest, and the Wife moves from the Court to the Forest and back. The Medium interjects the Husband's story into the reenactment in the Forest, but she remains in the Court.

It is imperative that the characters appear distinctly different as each version requires. In Tajomaru's story, he is bold and clever, yet shows a good reason for his actions, and shows an understanding of life in his testimony. He tells the Magistrate that "polite people" kill with power and money instead of the sword, but it is killing all the same. Considering his reputation, which we become acquainted with through the Wigmaker and the Woodcutter, he appears, in his own version, less prosaic than one would imagine. Tajomaru sees the Wife as beautiful, but with a temper which attracted him. The Husband is strong as a tiger and well-trained. He fought well, but not well enough for the clever Tajomaru. This is how the Bandit sees himself and the other two.

The Priest makes a visual transition to the Wife's story with the words, "I saw a face so delicate and defenseless -- the eyes,

like those of a bird with a broken wing you hold in your hand--" According to the Wife, she is defenseless, she loves the Husband deeply, and she is wronged. Tajomaru is low and vile, and the Husband shows such a lack of understanding and concern for her that she is driven nearly crazy. She becomes crazy enough that she kills him. She then tries to kill herself; but nature, it seems, was also against her, for "even the river scorns me." She ends her version with a plaintive plea to the Magistrate. "I can't be that worthless, can I? Can I?"

There is no concurrence between the first two versions and the Husband's statement, for his story is that the Wife is so wretchedly evil she encourages the Bandit to kill him. Even Tajomaru has more compassion than she does, for he begins to understand the Wife, and says he will kill her if the Husband wants. After Tajomaru cuts him loose, the Husband takes the only action possible to save face. He commits the ancient suicidal ritual of "seppuku." In doing so, he is retaining his dignity.

The Woodcutter admits to witnessing the whole incident. His relating what he saw does, as the Wigmaker says, have more of a "smell of truth" than the other stories. His tale shows all three characters as self-concerned and somewhat weak. After the rape occurs, the Wife's main concern is her hair. Tajomaru wishes to take the Wife with him, making her his woman. The Husband, when cut free by the Wife, can think only of saving face. An argument between the couple ensues, during which Tajomaru learns that the Wife is the daughter of a kitchen maid. The Wife, unable to

sway either man, first tries tears, then tries, successfully, to goad them into fighting. Even the death is, in this story, less than honorable.

Since we subsequently discover that the Woodcutter is not a disinterested bystander, but has stolen the silver-handled sword, his story is less than totally credible. Parker Tyler, in explaining the cause for the different versions, takes a psychological approach in Rashomon as Modern Art. He states that each person was in a state of mental shock.

Each participant is justified in reconstructing it in a manner to redeem the prestige of the moral sense, which, consciously or not, is a civilized person's most precious possession. The catastrophe temporarily annihilated the moral reality on which civilized human consciousness is based.¹⁷

Parker goes on to state that the Woodcutter's mental state is apparent from the opening scene, and that his version is no more plausible than the others. If his version is also not to be believed, wherein lies the truth?

In discussion with the actors about what might have really happened to bring about the Samurai's death, we talked about the psychological aspect of shock. We considered it to be the only viable explanation for not only the different stories in Rashomon, but also in our modern street-corner accident or murder, where all observers report seeing something different. It began to not matter what had actually happened in the plot. The playwrights' view of the limitations but innate dignity of all men emerged.

Character Analyses

Priest

The Buddhist Priest is the first character we see as the play begins, and the last to exit at the end. Having "lost" faith in his calling and fled the Temple, the Priest stops at the Rashomon Gate. The Woodcutter finds him, and they awaken the Wigmaker whose questions bring about the retelling of the "horrible crimes." We do not know where the Priest is going, for he does not know himself. He is in a confused and a bitter state of mind, for he is questioning the actions of mankind and his own beliefs. His father was a rich mirror-maker in Kiwa who did not want him to become a priest. He had answered his father with "A man doesn't look for his soul in a mirror." Now he thinks "perhaps my father was right."

The crimes reported at the Court have upset him terribly. He can understand earthquakes, fire, famine and pestilence as "natural things" which are not supposed to make sense. It is "the savagery of men toward one another, and to themselves" which has made him see people as crumbling and lost. He feels that he has failed to inspire and to teach the people; for when the Woodcutter tells him "They say you've taught the people much," he replies, "You were with me at the Court yesterday. You saw how well they learned."

He has lost faith in the people; but more important, he has lost faith in himself. He has not lost faith in his religion, but feels he is "ignorant" and "unworthy" to function as a priest: "The all-seeing Buddha knows -- he knows how unworthy I am." He is a man without hope.

It is important to note that the Priest is living in a time before Zen Buddhism had come to full flower in Japan. The religion had traveled to Japan from India through China in the 6th Century, but did not take root until after the end of the 12th Century. The Priest was functioning somewhat as a missionary. He was trying to awaken the people to the Buddhist beliefs.

Zen Buddhism requires aesthetic self-discipline and detachment, and values intuition as of supreme importance. Enlightenment is reached through self-discipline and through rejection of the rational mind. A practitioner of Buddhism tunes into the metaphysical and sees the physical life as a paradox, for everything on the physical plane has its opposite: black and white, yes and no, life and death. Life and death should be treated indifferently, for they are on the physical plane and are therefore not real. A Zen Buddhist detaches himself from this physical plane and operates in the Here and Now. It is a mental tuning in to God as a life force; and for that, there is no time in the sense of yesterday or tomorrow. It is always the Now.

Because the Priest is unable to remain detached, he feels he has failed. He feels helpless, he feels hopeless, and he feels incapable of functioning in his role as a priest.

The Priest mainly lets the Woodcutter relate the stories told at the Court, but he interjects comments which are additions and punctuations to the tale. In the middle of Act Two, after the Husband's story has been told through the Medium, the Woodcutter violently shouts, "It's a lie! A lie!" It is at this point that the Priest realizes that the Woodcutter has lied too. He says, "But you did not find a dead man -- you saw him alive -- and the Bandit and the woman --" The Priest, however, believes that one of the stories was the truth, and that the Woodcutter could have cleared up the matter if he had spoken out at Court. He is stunned when the Woodcutter states that none of the stories was true. He believes there must be some reason, some answer which will lead to the one truth.

When the Wigmaker tells him to keep on running, and not wait for the miracle, the Priest says:

Maybe the miracle is here -- now. Maybe it's you.
The rain -- holding us here at the Rashomon Gate. Having
to tell -- to you -- the whole horrible tale. And out of
your contempt and mockery, uncovering the truth -- at last.

He soon finds out that the truth does not lie in the Woodcutter's version, for it turns out that the Woodcutter's story differs from all of the others. Even more disillusioned, the Priest prepares to leave when the Wigmaker finds an abandoned baby and takes the blanket from the child. After a scuffle with the Wigmaker, and the Woodcutter's admission to the theft of the sword, the Priest turns against the Woodcutter, until he realizes, as the Woodcutter says, "a silver-handled sword can dry a lot of tears."

From this brief instant of seeing the world from the Woodcutter's point of view, the Priest attains his perspective. He pronounces, "You're many things. A man -- like all men." It is not until he sees the Woodcutter as a part of humanity that the Priest can recognize himself as a part of that humanity. He states, "I thought only of how much I could teach the people. But it is you who teach me." Seeing and accepting himself has brought back his belief in himself, and it is firmer now than ever before. He is ready to return to his ministry.

The dramatists are conveying an optimistic point of view about man's ability to understand his own frailty and accept his own limitations while still holding fast to a faith in some metaphysical truths. The Priest is the instrument through which the Kanins establish their message of humanity.

Woodcutter

When the lights rise on the Priest at the beginning of the play, the Woodcutter is the first to bring action to the scene as he runs up to the Gate; and he is the first to speak. We see his simple garments, and we see the axe. He soon admits that he is a woodcutter, but he admits more as he says, "I'm only a woodcutter. All I know is chopping wood...." In this scene he acknowledges his station in life and his lack of formal learning. Yet we see he understands what is going through the Priest's mind, for he tells him it makes no sense to leave the Temple and his place with the people. His concern is evident and clear, although his words proclaim confusion over what has happened in the Court. He tries to reassure the Priest, telling him he has "taught the people much." His embarrassment over the smell of his clothing has kept him from going to Temple; but he has kept up with events, for he had known all about the Priest, and is concerned enough to try to find him.

When the Wigmaker appears, the Woodcutter urges the Priest to go to another part of the Gate. Although a woodcutter's station in life is near the bottom of the social ladder, he feels above the Wigmaker, for he calls him a "scavenger" and tells him not to be "so low" when talking to a Priest. He tells the Priest that the Wigmaker is "a thief, a jackal -- an old swindler!" He also knows

that the Wigmaker's wigs are made from hair which is stolen from corpses, and compares him to the worst people he can think of at the moment, saying, "He's as bad as the three at the Police Court yesterday."

At the Wigmaker's insistence, the Woodcutter and Priest relate what happened in court, but it is the Woodcutter who takes a major role in the telling of the testimonies. It is during this time that we can see something is bothering him, for he is nervous, he seems to be worried, and he withdraws. When urged to continue his story and repeat what Tajomaru said, he retreats with a "Nothing!"

After the Husband's version is relayed, the Woodcutter unthinkingly jumps up shouting "It's a lie! A lie! His whole story is a lie! He didn't kill himself! He was --" He tries to side-step the Wigmaker's pointed questions about how he could know such a thing, but is forced to admit to the Priest that he saw the whole thing. This is another example of the Woodcutter's concern, for it is the Priest's argument of blundering justice which sways him. The Woodcutter cannot evade the fact, however reluctantly, that he is interested in the truth, and, as such, cannot avoid the necessity of being truthful himself even though it means becoming "involved."

Although the Priest believes that the Woodcutter's version will unveil the truth by corroborating with one of the others, his story negates all three, and shows an impartial view of three characters who are all acting in a selfish fashion. Soon after he

finishes his tale, we find out that he was involved in the incident after all, for he is the one who stole the sword. It is ironic that the Wigmaker is instrumental in revealing this information, for the Woodcutter has placed himself above the Wigmaker. When the Wigmaker says he tried to help him cover up "as one thief to another," it is a hard blow to the Woodcutter.

It is the Woodcutter's tenderness in comforting the baby and his admission of why he took the sword that brings about the resolution of the play. The Woodcutter says he has six children of his own at home who are, at times, cold and hungry. Apologetically he utters, "What can I say? A silver-handled sword can dry a lot of tears." At this point, he accepts himself as a man who is no better than the Wigmaker or any other man. It is the Woodcutter who precipitates the Priest's resolution that brings the play to a close.

Wigmaker

The Wigmaker is a scavenger. He steals hair from corpses; but he says, they are "the very finest corpses in Kyoto." He is a realist who has his own philosophy on life. "Run from the live ones," he claims. As the only character who was not directly involved in the incident or in Court, the Wigmaker can weigh and sift the information from the different versions with aloofness. After hearing the Wife's story, he points out that the Priest has been emotionally swayed. "See how your heart bleeds for her? She confesses to a murder, but you can't forget her face." He is a cynical and a questioning man. At his insistence, the Priest and the Woodcutter relate what happened at Court.

He has heard of Tajomaru, and after he is told of the rape, he laughs and relates a similar story of rape. Eager to hear the whole tale, he urges them on every time they pause. "What else did he say -- Tajomaru? Come on, he must've said something more. Didn't he?" He has a definite and a distinct sense of humor, and his wry comments are a comic relief from the heaviness of the violent incident.

He is also perceptive, for he sees through the Woodcutter's story and knows who drew the silver-handled sword from the Husband's breast. He sees through the Priest, too, for he tells him

"You can't even look at the dirty face of the world you live in without wanting to run from it."

The Wigmaker's philosophy on life is exemplified by his final speech which begins, "I once saw a painting -- a man hanging by a rope over a precipice." In this speech, man is shown hanging, with no way to go that will bring relief or happiness. But, as the Wigmaker avers, "let's not argue about right and wrong the few minutes we're dangling here." He firmly believes that there is no use in wasting time by worrying or discussing what is right or wrong. A man should live the best he can in a world which cannot be changed.

His thoughts of profit are always an underlying motivation which drive him to provide for himself. This is shown in his last line when he takes his leave of the Priest and the Woodcutter. "Anyway, my thanks to you -- both -- for such an entertaining afternoon. And profitable too."

It is not until the final scene that the Wigmaker acts. He expropriates the baby's blanket on the grounds that since someone will take it, why not him. His justification is weak, but his act precipitates the unveiling of the truth. In defending himself from the Woodcutter, he forces the Woodcutter to admit to the theft of the sword.

Despite his realistic nature, the Wigmaker is an eloquent and poetic speaker, drawing pictures with his words in a vivid and expressive manner. His speech which describes the painting is

an example of this trait. When he accuses the Woodcutter, he does not prosaically ask whether the Woodcutter took the sword. Rather, he questions "What happened? Did it melt away? Was it swallowed up by the earth?" When the Priest is urging the Woodcutter to speak the truth and relate to them what he witnesses, the Wigmaker says, "At last! The divine mouthpiece! This is your moment, my friend. The hand of Buddha guides your lips!"

The Wigmaker's humor, cynicism, and eloquence present an interesting and complex character. His presence at the Gate adds the catalytic element to those scenes as well as the comic relief; and his manner of speaking elevates the Gate scenes, adding dimension to the dirty, life-like realism the setting presents.

The Bandit, the Husband, and the Wife

The Samurai class rose to power in the Eleventh Century; and by the time of the play, 1190, this group had taken an active part in overthrowing the Heian culture. At this point in Japanese history, Kyoto, as the capital of Japan, was a crumbling city. The deteriorating state of the Rashomon Gate is symbolic of both the city and the collapsing culture. The way of the Samurai is important in understanding the Husband, the Wife and the Bandit. Before looking at the different roles these three characters play in the different versions of the story, one should consider the role the Samurai played in society, the place women held in such a society, and the position of an outcast like the notorious bandit, Tajomaru.

A Samurai warrior was trained from birth, for one must be born into his class. Religious, philosophical, and aesthetic elements mingled to produce his psyche; and his training included control of his mind as well as of his body. Buddhism taught him to command his mind as he was taught to control his weapons. His attitude toward death must be no different than his attitude toward life, for they are one and the same. This accounts for the Samurai's procedure in committing suicide. The core of the body is lodged in its center. The solar plexis area houses the centers of spirit, will

and emotion. To expose it not only shows sincerity of belief, but is beautiful. To expose this center of centers also shows extreme courage, for the thrust and cut method required in committing suicide in this manner necessitated strength of body and of character and determination. It was not easily done in the proper manner.

One of the reasons for suicide was to avoid disgrace and loss of face. Honor and face were both very important matters in a Samurai's life, and they have a close affinity. Honor holds the meaning as we know it now, but face is something more. Face is an additional amount of personal integrity.

The Husband in Rashomon illustrates these qualities. When he appears for the first time, the audience must be visually awed. His carriage should show his strength and grace, and his costume must be brilliant. The visual effect will be even more striking by the fact that, prior to his entrance, only lower class characters have been seen.

The role of women in Japanese society at that time was totally subservient. Their position is explained in an ancient proverb: A woman looks to her husband as to the Gods, for if she offends her husband, she offends the Gods. It was not uncommon for a wife to follow her husband into death if he committed suicide, for a Samurai's wife often carried a dagger or knife of her own and was trained to use it. Her training often began as a child, for it was unusual for a Samurai to lower himself by marrying out of his class. If he did, he risked losing face in the eyes of society.

Not being his equal, she cannot walk beside him. We do not know yet that she was not born to be a Samurai's wife, for the richness of her clothing matches his. Although she is visually attractive, she contrasts with the Husband for she is unable to join his class completely, both in society's view and in her husband's eyes.

The Bandit is in rebellion against society, claiming to be "the fisherman's son who owns the forest." Doubtless it is his revolt against the norms which drive him to prey on the rich and noble members of the society he hates, stealing, killing and raping. As an outcast, the Bandit would not ever be able to re-enter society again, and he would be put to death if caught. Tajomaru, however, has a great disdain for society. This is evident in his version, where he tells the Magistrate how he feels about killing.

Blood is ugly to you polite people who kill with power and money instead of the sword. Sometimes you even say it's for their own good, the ones you destroy.

In the Bandit's version, he is the hero. He claims he was more clever than the Husband, for he was able to trick him. Although the Husband was strong, fighting like a "trapped tiger," Tajomaru was able to overcome him. Even in the sword fight at the end of his tale, the Samurai is portrayed as noble and as well trained as a Samurai should be. No one had ever crossed swords more than fifteen times with Tajomaru before, and the Husband fought "very well;" but the Bandit's pride proclaims his own

skills as superior.

The Wife of this version is attractive, yet she has the nerve and the strength to pull her dagger and attack the Bandit. He had the feeling "she was eager" for him, but afterwards she only cried. She then tried to trick him into fighting with her husband, but Tajomaru proved his prowess by fighting of his own accord and winning. The key word to the Wife in Tajomaru's tale is the line "It must have been her temper which attracted me."

In the Husband's version, the Wife is self-concerned and a sexual animal who enjoys the rape. She then tells the Bandit to take her away with him; and when he begins to carry her off, she turns on her husband and says, "Kill him." Tajomaru has more compassion than the Wife here, for he throws her down and offers to kill her if the Husband wishes. Being wronged in this manner, the Husband's only real alternative is the one which will save face. He must and does commit "seppuku."

The Wife's story of the incident portrays the Bandit as vile and coarse. After the rape he struts about, drinking and bragging of his other conquests. Her husband is seen as totally lacking in compassion and understanding. He is contemptuous and cold to her, refusing to even speak to her. His coldness drives her into a fury. Since she has loved him and tried so hard to do as he wished, she feels wronged to the point she must strike out at him. In her distraction, she strikes out with the sword with which she had just cut his bonds, killing him.

The Woodcutter's version presents all three characters as flawed. Tajomaru is weak and cowardly. He is willing to kill the Husband when he is tied to the tree, yet does not want a fair fight with him. The Husband is also cowardly; and his main concern is not for his wronged wife, but is over his possible loss of face. The Wife is also selfish. After the rape, her first thought is to fix her hair. She cuts her husband loose, thinking he will fight for her honor; but he tells her she is not worth the fight. She is a slut in his eyes, and to fight over such a woman would dishonor his sword, which is a noble weapon. The couple begins to fight, and Tajomaru, hearing that the woman is only the daughter of a kitchen maid begins to leave.

The Wife stops him from leaving; and, verbally attacking each of them in turn, willfully provokes a fight between them. Even their fight shows them in less than heroic terms, for as one attacks, the other runs. The killing is a mistake which lends no honor to either of them, for the Husband slips and falls on his own sword. In comparison with the other versions, each of which presents the storyteller as the hero of his own tale, the Woodcutter's view of the incident shows none of them as admirable.

The Court Characters

The Deputy, the Mother and the Medium, the three characters who appear only in the Court, function as catalysts, through which the first three versions of the tale are introduced. Each of these characters leads into the telling of the tale by Tajomaru, the Wife and the Husband. Each character appears or speaks first, presenting the character whose version is beginning.

In his brief scene, we see the Deputy very proud of his importance in the investigation; but we also see him as cowed in the presence of the notorious bandit. He is puffed up with pride, yet he is afraid of Tajomaru. Because the Deputy looks a little foolish, Tajomaru, when he speaks, appears more real and more believable. He is rough and he is gruff. It is through the Deputy's fear, through his permitting Tajomaru to first spit on him and then kick him aside, that we see the Bandit represented as fearsomely as Tajomaru's version requires.

The Mother and the Wife appear at the same time; but the Mother speaks first, saying, "Yes, your excellency. This is my daughter, Kinume -- my only daughter -- my poor child who stares at me with vacant eyes." The Mother's opening speech allows the audience to see the Wife as a broken woman, a lost woman, as a woman who stares vacantly but does not see. She appears as the Priest has introduced her, "delicate and defenseless"; and his

perception is confirmed by the Mother. Through the Mother, our sympathy for the Wife is intensified.

We discover that the Wife is honest enough to correct the Mother, telling the Magistrate the truth about her, that she was a maid in the Samurai's house. As a kitchen servant, a member of the lower class, the Mother would enjoy some prestige if her daughter married a samurai. Her social class, however, would not be altered. Because the Mother lives in a fantasy world, she appears somewhat ridiculous and less than trustworthy. She is caught in her web of truth-stretching because she wants to believe it. It is a fantasy of which she is aware, yet she wants to so "tickle" herself. She is deluding herself when she chooses "to tickle myself with small fancies."

The Medium begins the story of the Husband by going into a trance to establish contact with his soul. Her narrative of his words is interjected into the Forest representation of his version, and she remains visible throughout. Because a dead man is speaking through the Medium, the actress' presentation is bizarre. Her voice must be as unworldly as the circumstances. She must be scary and she must be shocking. Only then will the Husband's version have the eerie, spiritual effect the situation necessitates. The Medium, too, is a catalyst for presenting her subject's version of the incident.

CHAPTER IV

REHEARSAL LOG

- August 23, 1982 Production proposal for Final Project -- directing Rashomon by Fay and Michael Kanin -- handed in to Dramatic Arts Department Chairman.
- August 31 Received departmental approval on proposal.
- September 7 Terry Doughman agrees to be choreographer.
- September 9 Final Project Proposal, Option II, handed in to Graduate Program Committee.
- September 13 Received approval for Final Project. Wayne White agrees to be costume designer. Conference with Bob Welk concerning set designer. He feels Wayne White should design.
- September 15 Wayne White agrees to design the set and costumes.
- October 18 Conference with Dr. Curtis. Need to make work schedule, including production work plan. Must work with Bob Welk to set up production schedule.
- October 22 Conference with Bob Welk. It is possible to rearrange audience seating and playing area in Studio Theatre. Discussion on scheduling of technical deadlines.
- October 28 Marie Angele agrees to design sound, and Ina Weiner will do props. Conference with Wayne about set possibilities. Proscenium set is out, and we both are considering putting the audience on two sides, with playing area in the middle. First publicity blurb given to Lori Hoffman for program notes. Conference with Bob Welk. He feels Wayne should design lights.
- October 29 Conference with Wayne. He does not want to design lights for he feels he would spread himself too thin. Told him he must discuss this with Bob himself. Decision that Hedda strike must remove audience seating for our rehearsals over the vacation period.
- November 1 Conference with Bob. Studio Theatre should be set up as moveable. It is not now, but will be. Two fire exits are our only limitations. Scene breakdown given to Wayne, as I feel the center playing area will not work because of the court and forest entrances.

- November 2 Conference with Bob and Wayne. Bob will work closely with Wayne on lights; plot, hanging and focusing. Wayne agrees to design lights after Bob explains his function as mainly verbal -- to say how he sees the lights functioning on the set and costumes. Wayne voices concern over depending on other people for construction, as we both know bodies will not be plentiful during vacation. Discussion on the concept of the show. Because there will be a selection of elements similar in each version, the tree for example, and because each character believes his version is true, we talked about "selected realism" as a concept statement.
- November 5 Conference with Ina. Terry Doughman will provide all the weapons and accouterments. Ina will deal with hand props. Conference with Bob, Wayne and Terry. The control booth will be a part of the gate, and the forest will be 10 feet by 23 feet. Not an ideal size or shape for building a realistic fight, but is workable. Possibility of bamboo trees as partial obstacles. I request an audience guard rail to define set and audience seating.
- November 8 Conference with Wayne and Terry. Long rectangular space needs some obstacles for fight. Conference with Charles Chapman. He will be gone immediately after finals, and will be back for the one act festival. He agrees that the studio should be cleared at the Hedda strike, and advises that I set up with plant details like bathroom lights and who to call if something goes wrong over vacation when no one is there.
- November 12 Conference with Wayne about ground plan. Scene breakdown discussed, and agreement that audience cannot be on both sides because of entrances and exits. We arrive at an "L" shape.
- November 30 Conference with Bob and Doug about auditions. Wednesday will be prepared readings. Thursday from 7-8 we'll read the Hedda people, then take turns reading others for cold readings. Conference with Bob, Charles, Wayne and Terry. Conversion of audience platforms during Hedda strike and as much building of gate and court platforms as time permits. Bamboo tree tubing in shop may be used. Leaves on forest floor. Silk screen ink for panels and costumes. Terry suggested a commercial art ink that may be painted on, Hunts Speedball. For lighting, there will be three main areas. I requested a hole in the gate platform for the fire, and also one in the court for a medium special.
- December 1 Conference with Wayne. Costume sketches look great. No set rendering yet, working with groundplan. Prepared auditions good. Saw some people I can easily use.

- December 2 Cold readings -- have the cast except for the Woodcutter.
- December 3 Read Bill Robbeloth in my office for the part of the Woodcutter. He was cast, completing the list of characters.
- December 4 Cast list up. Character conferences for the 15 and 16, with a read through on the 18.
- December 12 Hedda strike. Audience platforms nearly completed. Gate platforms and court mainly there too. We can see the space!
- December 13 Everything postponed until December 18.
- December 18 Cast meeting and first read through. Story background and style concept presented by me, and a designer presentation by Wayne, showing set ground plan and costume sketches. Pleased with the vocal contrasts at the gate, and with the rapport between the three in the forest.
- December 19 Blocking rehearsal for court and forest.
- December 20 Finished Act I blocking, begin Act 2. Character conferences: Priest, relaxation process and formula to develop calm as basis on which conflict can be built upon, key lines in understanding of humanity; Medium, the husband's story through her, function as a catalyst, being ageless and out-of-this-world. Diction for Deputy and Wigmaker discussed.
- December 21 Greg gone now through the 27. Rehearsal of court and forest scenes. Begin blocking dagger fight, setting each move separately. Each cues the next, like a line. Every position of foot and hand carefully worked out and set. Must be exact. Centering of the body. Same process for fight scenes. Character conference with Wigmaker. Discussed his qualities and image, and his function in the plot. Conference with Mother, discussed her pride and fantasy and the works of the social structure. Deputy character conference, discussed him as the introduction of Tajomaru. Must be both fear and pride. Character conference with Wife. She requests the wig to work in as soon as possible. Discussion on the different versions.
- December 22 Character conference with Terry. Role of Samurai in society. Motivations in different versions and the meaning of the plot. Character conference with Woodcutter. Necessity of him showing fear, being secretive, wishing for all to come out all right. His role in play's message. Discussion with Wes

about Tajomaru's gruffness and his pride in his version of the tale. Gate rehearsal lacking. Woodcutter is overplaying and vocally emphasizing at the wrong times. Mugging too much.

December 23-25 Off.

December 27-28 Ice storm, rehearsal cancelled.

December 29 Blocking of blanket scuffle. Woodcutter not listening to choreographer. Lecture to all on the necessity of doing exactly as Terry says, step-by-step to avoid injury. Terry gives lecture on muscle memory and working the scuffle every day. Fight rehearsals coming along in step-by-step manner too. First fight, serious one, blocked, and second one begun. Fights are rehearsing every day for at least one hour prior to other rehearsals. Gate scenes need work to play as a unit. Priest and Wigmaker working together. Forest scenes need more distinction between versions. Working out pre-sets for props.

December 30 Blanket scuffle discovery. The Woodcutter can stop the Wigmaker's fall by blanket tension. This adds more control. Giving the Woodcutter the same notes every night. Requested him to write down all and study before coming. Conference with Tom. Showed him how to mark the script and work with it for best rehearsal results and learning lines most economically. Greg coming along very consistently.

December 31 Off.

January 1, 1983 Tajomaru, Wife, Terry. Worked dagger fight, fights and scenes. Characters developing to make versions different.

January 2 Tree and tube log in place. Run through starting to show cohesiveness. Work on transitions for Gate, also on getting Terry tied to the tree. Adding vocalizations to dagger fight. Mother working on adding dream-like quality to her voice for the fantasy speeches. Vocal rehearsal with the Medium. Every word gone over and marked with screamingly loud or whisper soft variation. Lines due today, and all but Woodcutter doing well off the book.

January 3 Conference with Wayne and Lori. Program information decided upon. 15 minute intermission and characters listed in order of appearance. The floor looks terrible, and Wayne and I want to go with a painted canvas to make it even. The tube log is rolling and looks out of place with the built tree. Log must be built like tree. I found out that Wayne has changed the design of the panels, making them colored, an idea which I do not like and do not think will work. I am assured they won't look strange, but have insisted on my veto right if they look bad. Fight rehearsals really coming along. Watching angles closely. Tempo starting to pick up.

- January 4 Act 2 rehearsal concentrating on transitions to scenes, especially in the husband's version. Priest looks too comfortable with baby, so have called Peggy Horrocks and asked her to bring her baby for them to practice holding.
- January 5 Fabric shopping all afternoon. Bargains at big sale saving lots on the budget. Conference with Bob and Wayne, in which canvas floor is approved. Since the Medium needs to be working with the rattle, I made it. Scene work with Medium, Deputy and Tajomaru and Gate. The Gate still lacking interaction, with the Woodcutter out of character and out of the scene while on stage. Discussion with him privately.
- January 6 Conference with Marie on sound. No internal music, just pre-show, intermission and post-show. Decision on which sound cues to leave out that are in the script. We have left out several thunders. Scene work on fights, blanket scuffle, Jesse and Chris. Gate scenes going the same, with the Woodcutter still unimproved.
- January 7 Requested obi for Terry and wig for Cathy again. Scene work with fights, Gate, Chris and Jesse. Conference with Woodcutter. His attitude is poor, as he seems indignant.
- January 8 Run through in which parts are beginning to gel. Dagger fight beginning to look as if the Wife is settling in and knows she feels confident about her body. Pace good too. Woodcutter still having problems with his lines and character.
- January 9 First panel hung. Colors add cartoonish quality, making it look like a Sunday funnies tree. Rehearsal started late because of time spent hanging panel. Run through suprisingly smooth.
- January 10 Recorded PSA, then rehearsed fights and Act 1. Work on entrances and exits from forest. Tajomaru and Wife must be in the same place each time!
- January 11 Lighting conference with Bob and Wayne. Decision that the leaves will be black. Also black will be the tree and log. Canvas floor is down, and will be in shades of grey with black, green and traces of red. Fights rehearsed for two hours, then Act 2 is run. Still doing character work with Woodcutter. He is resentful of direction. Priest consistently developing.
- January 12 Scene rehearsals with Mother, Deputy and Tajomaru, Medium and Gate. Woodcutter has terrible attitude, refusing to carry his prop, and possibly having other personal problems. After discussion with Dr. Curtis and Bob, I have decided to replace him. I talked this over with the Priest and Wig-maker, and they seem relieved. Called Bruce Graves, and he agreed to do the role. We Preview two weeks from tonight.

- January 13 and 14 Regular rehearsals cancelled to concentrate on the Gate. Bruce is blocked into scenes and scuffle. Character conference with Bruce. Woodcutter must be concerned, yet nervous; he is hiding something. I have requested that he have his lines by Tuesday, January 18. The Gate scenes are remarkably better already.
- January 15 Run through cancelled so lights may be hung.
- January 16 Run through, concentrating on scene transitions. This is the first time Bruce has seen the show. He has his lines two days early. Panels done and one is hung. The black on white doesn't look right, and the design is not the one I approved. Since the gauze is beginning to show wear, and may not hold up under another washing, suggestion that they be painted black, then white trees be painted on the black. I am insisting that the design I approved be the one used!
- January 17 Run through. Fights looking very good. The serious one is beginning to be at the right pace, and the humorous one is funny. Terry says one hour for the fights is still enough time. Those rehearsals still before the run through.
- January 18 Sound conference with Marie. I have given her the music to record. Run through beginning at 9 p.m. because of my night class, but the cast is ready and willing, and the scenes all went well.
- January 19 Final panels hung and they look wonderful. Whew! The white on black is just the right look, making them well worth the hassle we had in making them and getting them right. Run through has no obvious problems.
- January 20 Some set details that need fixing. The tree is wiggling, the beam is moving and the log is falling apart. These are minor, though. The run through very smooth.
- January 21 Conference with Bob and Marie. The crow call and the little breeze cue will definitely be the only live cues. Run through very smooth. The actors need an audience, and they need the visual accouterments.
- January 22 Dry tech at 2 p.m. Late start because of focusing. Sound finished and running. No real problems with sound, only volume changes. Barbie Davis doing very well on lights, her first time running board. Tech at 6 p.m. Actors visibly stimulated by atmosphere lights are providing.
- January 23 Costumes are finished. Run through fairly smooth. Wife needs a slip or undergarment. Actors working with entrance and exit problems with black curtain, needing more glow tape.

January 24 Run through. Curtain call worked on, but show generally running very well. Bob and I hooked up a light signal to cue the booth.

January 25 Set finished. The show is a living and breathing entity. It has its own life and shape.

January 26 Preview show. Well received from about 15 audience members.

CHAPTER V

Evaluation

Decisions concerning the set, the music, and the sword fights were made on the basis of what would best enhance the production. Primary considerations were the practicality of the space and facilities available in the Studio Theatre; theatricality and believability; and mood and atmosphere. This evaluation will first consider these elements before moving to the director's view of the final outcome. It will conclude with an evaluation provided by Dr. Rex McGraw, Chairman of the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

There is a flowing cinematic quality to the script. One scene moves fluidly into the next, changing versions of the tale, changing characters, and changing locales. The continuous shift in story and scene necessitated special consideration in planning and executing the set. The Appendix contains the scene breakdown used in the set and ground plan decisions. Because Tajomaru and the Wife cross back and forth between the Court and Forest, these two areas need to be adjacent. Likewise, the crosses of the Priest and Woodcutter through the Forest to the Gate necessitate that they be next to each other.

The scenic designer, Wayne White, and I scrutinized the demands of the script as well as the space. The Studio Theatre is approximately 50 feet by 75 feet, with three entrances on the West wall, which is 75 feet long. In the Northwest corner is the control booth. Our only limitations were: the state fire law requirements of two audience exits and one aisle for every seven audience seats; seating capacity numbering no less than 75; and the fights, which exacted as large an area as possible.

The style and technique of using a Japanese broadsword differs from the movements used to thrust and parry in European rapier fencing. Long circular swings and headcuts are utilized, and the form does not embrace the gentlemanly accommodations found in fencing. The broadsword fight would often be over after one or two swings, leaving one or both of the participants dead. There was more honor involved if a head cut split the head in two all the way down to the shoulders.

Choreographer Terry Doughman felt it necessary to have obstacles (e.g. trees, shrubs, brush) to build a fight around. Wayne and I went into a woody area in Elmwood Park for a demonstration by Terry and Wes Clowers, who was cast as the Bandit. Although we all were conscious of possible sight line problems any obstacle might make, Terry's point was proven in less than 30 seconds, as he and Wes alternately swung and hid behind trees and bushes.

Wayne and I were hopeful to include some obstacle besides the tree which the script dictates, but we first had to decide on the ground plan of the set and the placement of the three locales. Our first idea was a linear set with the forest in the middle, which

we felt would fulfill the script requirements. We began with the thought of running the set down the middle lengthwise, and ended with an "L" shape which nearly covered one 75 foot wall and one 50 foot wall, using the control booth in the corner as part of the Rashomon Gate. Placing the Court at the other end of the "L" and the Forest in the middle gave the entire floorspace to the Forest and allowed the scenes to flow into each other visually without a break.

It was not possible to add shrubery or bushes, but we added a fallen log to the forest area. This, together with a single tree, resulted in the only two set pieces that qualify as obstacles. Wayne's idea of scrimlike panels hanging near the upstage wall in the Forest area worked well to add depth to the set. These panels were partially diaphanous, and were painted with oriental trees. Because we approached the set with the idea of creating a mood and an atmosphere, we did not want historic realism or realistic set pieces. The panels succeeded in presenting an oriental flavor, and were sometimes used by the actors while waiting for their entrances. Terry added a nice piece of business with the panels for one fight. Tajomaru sneaked around a panel and suprised the waiting Samurai. This was a nice touch to the humorous fight, for the audience could see Tajomaru creeping behind it.

Original music for the Broadway production was used to set a mood. Composed by Laurence Rosenthal, it is available on Carlton Records. Using wildly heterogeneous instrumentation, his orchestra was comprised of international percussion and wind instruments

including: harp; vibraphone; samsisen; hand drums; bells; flutes; Nigerian squeeze drum; gongs; Indian ankle bells; Tibetan rice-drum; log drum; nut chains; antelope horn; and dulcitone.

Striving for poetic rather than actual truth, Rosenthal's music suggests the colors and shapes of the orient. Utilizing the Japanese noises of accelerated and ritarded drumbeat, high whistles, and flutes, the music is set against a background of syncopated bells, sticks and gongs. This score casts a spell and conjures a mood.

The music in the Broadway production functioned as a character, underlying and commenting on the action of the scene. Some of the titles for scenes are:

The Bandit's Story

- a.) In a grove
- b.) The rape
- c.) The duel

The Husband's Story

- a.) The medium
- b.) The betrayal
- c.) The suicide

Not having a composer complete with orchestra, or a sound system capable of slipping in underlying music unobtrusively, I decided not to use in-show music. I did want pre-show, intermission, and post-show music, though; and I wanted these sounds to enhance the mood and atmosphere which the set evoked without being authentic or period music.

After conferring with Dr. Roger Foltz, my mind was changed. He suggested that sounds which inferred the orient to a 1950's audience would affect the modern ear in a different manner, and

would remind "today's audience of the 'Twilight Zone'." He claimed that what we have today coming from Japan is stylized and not authentic. There is a pitch deviation associated with Japanese sounds, yet the tones always return to a major or minor within the whole or half tone scale as we know it. These sounds which the Western ear is used to are stylized and not authentically Japanese.

Because of his information, I decided to use a mixture of Japanese and American koto and flute music, including "The Koto Music of Japan" on Elektra Records and Jean-Pierre Rampal's "Japanese Melodies, Volume 3" on CBS Records. This music was effective in setting the mood, for it defined not only an oriental sound, but an unmistakably Japanese one. This music aided the effect produced by the set, completing the atmosphere.

The script calls for two sword fights and one dagger fight, and closely defines the action in each. The Wife draws her dagger and attacks the Bandit, culminating in the rape when she is overcome by him. The first sword fight is deadly serious; and because it is included as part of Tajomaru's testimony, both men fight bravely and very well. The second fight, as described by the Woodcutter, makes both men appear cowardly and ridiculous. Stage directions for the first fight include:

Tajomaru, with animal-like cunning, swiftly grabs his legs and slams him to the ground. The sword flies from the Husband's grasp. There's a wildly desperate scramble, accompanied by grunts and shouts, as each tries to reach the weapon and prevent the other from doing so.

These fights were carefully planned, and choreographed like a ballet. Each move was delicately placed to fit into a sequence of

moves, and each of these smaller parts included exact placement of each arm and leg. The angle of a wrist was often extremely important in making sure the sword was pointing in the proper direction. After the development of the precise blocking, each fight was rehearsed daily; and the speed and momentum were not increased until the actor's mind and muscle memory were firmly established with the action. Wooden rehearsal swords were used until these fights were secure; then the actors changed to metal broadswords.

Terry Doughman and I are both perfectionists, and we worked to form exactly the appearance we wanted, keeping the script and the closeness of the Studio in mind. Every precaution was taken to keep the swords and even the angles in which the swords were pointed away from the audience.

The Forest area reached to the edge of the audience seating, and the front row was literally on the floor of the Forest. Being concerned over the psychological aspects of the nearness of the front row, I requested a short guard rail or barrier to divide the audience's foot space from the Forest. What was suggested and decided upon by Bob Welk and Wayne White was a psychological barrier. The canvas flooring under the audience was painted brown; and the Forest floor was painted grey-black, thereby forming a line of demarcation in color between the audience and stage.

In spite of all the precautions and care taken concerning these fights, there was a protest. In the week preceding tech week, Dr. Curtis and Dr. Foltz viewed a rehearsal. Dr. Curtis approached me and stated that she and Dr. Foltz believed the metal swords were

too dangerous. She stated that the fights were extremely well done and realistic, and that Terry had done a wonderful job of choreography. She continued, though, by saying the metal swords should not be used because the audience would become fearful and perhaps endangered. She strongly urged me to return to the wooden rehearsal swords, for she believed nothing would be lost aesthetically.

I requested that Professors Bob Welk, Douglas Paterson, and Bill Lacey view these fight scenes. I felt secure in the actors' skill, preparation, and control, and firmly believed that the metal swords were artistically correct. Two angles were changed so the swords would point upwards. After these two alterations were made and the fights run again, the three faculty deemed them safe as well as artistic and exciting. Assessing a possible problem from an open-minded, rational perspective appeared to be the proper approach.

I was not sorry for standing firm with my decision to remain with the metal swords. The comments by Dr. McGraw concerning the fights substantiated my belief. He exclaimed, "They're wonderful!" They were "controlled" and "clearly executed," filling the audience with "terrified delight." He said the timing was right, and the intentions of the serious and humorous fights came through. He stated that he could tell the actors "all handled the equipment very carefully," and he "liked both of them very much."

I stated in my production proposal that Rashomon would be a worthwhile addition to the University Theatre season. I feel we

were successful. Partially due to the Gateway's picture on the front page and a four-page spread on the making of a play, the second weekend of performances was sold out. I believe the newspaper's coverage enabled us to reach people in the University who had not been drawn to our theatre before.

The production was of great personal value to me, affording me the opportunity to tackle challenges which aided me in developing my problem-solving abilities; and which tested my ability to remain calm and think rationally in situations which, at the time, seemed to be of crisis levels. One of my biggest rewards was in working with the actors, whose diverse talents ranged from no stage experience at all to extensive experience on stage. We were able to develop a close community which enabled us to help and learn from each other. This close relationship we shared enhanced our feelings of professional as well as personal growth while working together to present Rashomon.

Greg Bachmann, as the Priest, was physically and vocally precise, producing good sounds and showing an inner peace upon which his turmoil was built. Greg was wonderful to work with. He was always prepared and willing to work, and his progress was steady and consistent. The calmness of his character went against his basic nervous nature, so we worked on calming and relaxing processes which aided his character development.

Considering the fact that Bruce Graves was only with us for two weeks before opening night, I was amazed at his success in portraying the Woodcutter. At times his physical stance and nervousness seemed

to lack differentiation, and his character did not acquire the depth it might have had if he had been with us longer. He used a rapid breathing technique to begin and build his tension; and at times it read as a tiresome shaking with no purpose. This sometimes added a stiffness to the Woodcutter. Bruce did achieve an honesty and concern in his role which we had discussed as being necessary.

I was generally pleased with the way Tom McAndrew handled the role of the Wigmaker. He is a hard and an agreeable worker, and did not stop pushing himself to gain new insights into his character. His vocal range was continually explored, making his line deliveries always interesting, but sometimes not consistent. He needed to be shown how to mark his script so his readings would remain the same, and this helped in his memorization. He has a tendency to play what had worked well the night before, instead of living each moment anew and fresh; yet his body and voice helped him in presenting an effective character.

Jesse Conyers, as the Deputy, was surrounded by more confident and experienced actors; and he was scared. He was repeatedly apologizing for "being horrible" and must have said "I'm sorry" hundreds of times. Assistant director Lori Hoffman brought a dart gun with a rubber tip; and I told Jesse that every time he said he was sorry, I would shoot him. I did. Jesse never ceased to try, and he grew considerably in his character. I think if he could forget himself while he is onstage, his acting would be more effective.

Wes Clowers was physically ideal in the role of Tajomaru. He developed gestures and body language which fit the Bandit, and

captured traits which he was able to produce consistently. His voice was nearly as consistent as his body. Wes and I discussed his method of approaching a role, which I did not agree with, but which he said worked best for him. However, his process left him groping for lines longer than the other actors. Wes was the only actor who made me feel that I was not quite sure of what he was going to do. He had a tendency to overact, and when his wife was in the audience, his heightened bravado was unbelievable. Wes was effective, though, and was a crowd pleaser.

Terry Doughman constantly gave good, strong performances as the Husband. His carriage and physical appearance conjured the dignity and pride of a Samurai, and he always looked marvelous onstage. He possessed an inner intensity in his character, which was very important, considering the fact a large portion of his onstage time he was sitting immobile while tied to a tree. Terry tends to use the same gestures with his hands, making them relatively meaningless after a few times; and his belief that overacting is worse than underacting necessitated that I coax him into several bits. He was invaluable in his role as choreographer, always remaining patient and willing; and adding support and encouragement. Terry was generally looked up to by the cast.

I found Cathy Wells' portrayal of the Wife beautiful and appealing. I feel she was the most successful of all the actors in capturing the different levels of the separate versions. She was also a hard worker and very consistent in her progress. She

remained calm and willing in spite of the fact that her continual requests for a rehearsal kimono and wig were not granted. Because her role was so physical, she felt that working with these costume pieces would help her feel more comfortable. She put in many extra hours to develop and work on her dagger fight, as she had not encountered this type of physicality before. Her performances were consistent. She was sometimes close to melodramatic in her plea to the Magistrate at the conclusion of her version; but part of that is inherent in the script.

Marilyn Berman was successful in her role as the Mother. In spite of the fact that she had never been onstage before, she radiated stage presence and had a natural feel for her character. Also a hard worker, Marilyn took direction well and willingly, and tried many pieces of business on her own which worked with her character. She was a bit thrown off on the first night when her family was in the audience, but she was mainly very dependable.

The Medium was played by Chris Riza. I know the decision to portray the Medium as bizarre as we did was an extreme choice; and it turned out to be a role that was either loved or hated. We spent a great deal of rehearsal time working on her voice, going over her speeches line-by-line. With this control and volume work, she was able to hoarsely whisper one line and scream another. At times she tended to forget that it was the Husband's thoughts and feelings she was to present. We discussed this tendency, and she worked to improve her perspective.

The set, costumes, and lighting worked well to enhance the

visual aspects of the production. Wayne White, as designer, did an admirable job in capturing the Japanese atmosphere which the production required. His set utilized the limited space, helping the flow of the play as it moved from one locale to another. There were some problems in constructing the panels, but those problems were not insurmountable; and the panels, when finished, were perhaps the most striking aspect of the set.

The costumes were visually effective, and their mien magnified the feel of Japan induced by the set. It is unfortunate that the costumes for the Wife and the Husband were not washable as requested; but the dry cleaning after the first weekend made them adequate for the second weekend. In general, the costumes achieved their purpose and added a great deal.

While I consider Wayne's finished product outstanding, I feel his methods of approaching a problem made situations appear more difficult than they actually were. Wayne attended very few of the final rehearsals; and in the final stages before opening night I had to track him down to give him the set and costume notes I had taken. Wayne did put in a tremendous amount of time, many of those hours without any assistance; and his efforts resulted in a beautiful and believable framework for the action of the play.

Dr. Rex McGraw of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, attended Rashomon on Friday, January 28. His oral critique of the production was anticipated with a little apprehension, but his manner was totally relaxed and his method was to state all of his positive points first, putting the actors at ease immediately.

His points are discussed here in the order in which he made them.

Dr. McGraw found that the design of the set helped the flow of the play, and used an "admirable concept" which provided for all the locales. He said it was a "good use of space." He questioned the color of the set, asking why it was dark; then he admitted that that had been an early note and he had been afraid the serious qualities in the play had been reflected by the set. He stated that the Court was very effective, and had a "Japanesey" quality which he liked.

The costumes were "in general quite effective." Most effective, were the Priest and the Husband, and he liked the "colorful contrast between the Court and Forest, and the Gate." He thought the hair for the Husband and the hairlessness of the Priest to be the best use or nonuse of hair, and asked why some of the actors wore beards.

He had only one comment on the lighting. "The lighting was generally quite effective and helped the flow a lot."

He liked the swords and arrows, but thought the wineskins were too modern and the baby's blanket was too white. Baby sounds "drive him crazy" personally, and he asked if we had considered using an actor to produce the crying. He wondered why a gong was used for what the script called a temple bell. Asking about the use of hand gestures, he stated that he thought the Japanese people to tend to hide their hands. When I explained that we had avoided any stereotypical Japanese actions, he said, "O.K. Just be selective."

Dr. McGraw said the Priest was "physically right on" and very

"priestly." He noted that the Priest's inner peace showed, and said only one thing had bothered him. When the Priest takes a last look at the Rashomon Gate, he said he hadn't known what he was thinking.

The Woodcutter, according to Dr. McGraw, "has an honesty and a concern." Bruce and I found this comment especially gratifying because these were the two key words we had been working with. Dr. McGraw said Bruce tended to hold his face down, which he knew was a part of his character, but advised him to keep his chin up and his eyes down.

The Wigmaker "was particularly creepy. This means I think you did a good job," said Dr. McGraw. He said the humor was handled well, but advised him to watch his laughs and hunches which "occasionally appeared cliché."

Dr. McGraw said he had "no complaints with the Deputy. He comes out, does his business and gets off." He stated Jesse's job had been "fine."

Tajomaru was "a good job of casting," said Dr. McGraw. Stating Wes had "captured the Bandit's traits," he cautioned him in using, "rather overusing" guttural sounds, but said it was a "good characterization."

"One of the things I always look for," said Dr. McGraw, "is the way people listen onstage." After making a joke about his comment since the Husband is gagged part of the time, he continued to say that Terry was "very effective." His preparation for sepukku had been "detailed, clear, had build and swept us in." He cautioned

Terry about the use of his hands, again saying, "be selective." He thought the performance was a "good, strong performance. It was clean and understandable."

The Wife "got all sides clearly and captured the different levels," giving a "good performance." She had appeared properly "nice and pure and good" in her version, but noticed a fine line Cathy should be aware of. He said she did not play it melodramatic, "as it well could be played." He continued, saying, "just be careful to not overdo it." He found she had "good, clean changes going into each episode."

"The Mother was a job well done. It's all here," Dr. McGraw said, pointing to his heart, "and you got it." He found Marilyn "radiated an oriental feel more than any other character." She was "extremely well done."

The Medium was "visually quite awesome." Dr. McGraw noted hearing several gasps in the audience, and claimed Chris' performance to be "strong." Her hair and movement "have a nice Japanesey look." He said Chris was occasionally "too big" and cautioned her to "keep thinking of who's saying it."

"Now to the director," said Dr. McGraw. "The whole production has a nice level of honesty and seriousness of purpose." He was "amazed at how skillfully the people got on and off," and thought "each scene built nicely to a climactic moment." He was pleased that "the narrative -- the story -- came through quite clearly" and said he was "glad to see the humorous sides there." He thought the production had "seriousness and drive of moment" and was "a job well

done."

Dr. McGraw felt the risers for the audience were not high enough to provide good sight lines. He cautioned me to keep the actors up whenever possible. He said he understood, though, that budgets would not always allow for all new platforms, and the script necessitated the many low scenes. He spoke about some general feelings of his concerning the script itself. The play begins to "creak a little in the baby scene." He attributed part of the contrived episode with the baby to the fact that it was written in the 1950's, and admitted it to be a problem inherent in the script. We discussed that neither one of us really believed in altering a playwright's work. The message of the play was strong enough to overcome any dated quality for today's audience, and the mystery of the puzzle of truth is a component which draws the audience in. We both believe these advantages outweighed the disadvantages which the baby scene imposes.

The critique by Dr. McGraw was especially gratifying for me as a director, because he focused on and appreciated the elements I was emphasizing.

ENDNOTES

¹John McVittie, "A Sprig of Cherry," Introduction to Japanese Short Stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1961), p. 17.

²Howard Hibbett, Introduction to Rashomon and Other Stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1952), p.14.

³Ibid.

⁴McVittie, p. 14.

⁵Ibid., p. 21.

⁶Ibid., p. 12.

⁷Hibbett, p. 13.

⁸Ibid., p. 15.

⁹Donald Richie, "Rashomon and Kurosawa," In Rashomon by Akira Kurosawa (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1969), p. 70.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 68.

¹¹Walter Kerr, Review of Rashomon by Fay and Michael Kanin, in New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1959, p. 400.

¹²Kenneth Tynan, "The Bright Side of Homicide," New Yorker, 7 February, 1959, p. 81-82.

¹³Frank Aston, Review of Rashomon by Fay and Michael Kanin, in New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1959, p. 399.

¹⁴Brooks Atkinson, Review of Rashomon by Fay and Michael Kanin, in New York Times Theatre Reviews 1952-1959, 8 February, 1959.

¹⁵Robert Coleman, Review of Rashomon by Fay and Michael Kanin, in New York Theatre Critics' Reviews 1959, p. 398.

¹⁶Peter Glenville, "Roll Call for Rashomon," Theatre Arts, February, 1959, p. 12-13.

¹⁷Parker Tyler, "Rashomon as Modern Art," In Rashomon by Akira Kurosawa (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1969), p. 200-201.

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FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

OPTION II

Alison Laurio
September 9, 1982

I propose to direct Rashomon by Fay and Michael Kanin as an Option II Final Project for partial fulfillment of requirements for a Master of Arts Degree. Attached is a production proposal which has been submitted to the Dramatic Arts faculty, requesting approval of the selection of Rashomon, space on the UNO Theatre Calendar for the 1982-1983 season and allocation of departmental funds necessary to mount the production. Since this proposal has been approved*, I am formally requesting Final Project approval from the Graduate Program Committee. I also request that Dr. Julia Curtis be appointed as advisor from the Graduate Faculty, as I feel she can best guide me through the successful completion of this project; and that Dr. Roger Foltz and Dean Margaret Gessaman serve on this project committee.

I understand that the document in this Final Project must include an analysis of the play; an analysis of the characters; a statement about the playwrights' other works; a bibliography; a copy of the prompt book with blocking patterns and cues; a log indicating those decisions which affect the production; photographs of the production; and an evaluation of the production's effectiveness. Because Rashomon originated in 1950 with two short stories written by Ryunoduke Akutagawa, my research on this project includes not only those short stories, but the film Rashomon from 1950, which was the catalyst between the

* See Appendix

stories and the play itself. The Japanese Kabuki drama is also included as resource material for this production although the Kabuki style will not be utilized.

The plot of the play is a result of an incident. A samurai and his wife travel through a forest outside of Kyoto. The samurai is found dead, and the local Magistrate holds an inquiry. The action of the play revolves around three characters discussing the events of the inquiry after seeking the shelter of the Rashomon gate during a storm. What happened to bring about the samurai's death is told to the audience through a series of flashbacks, and three different accounts of the incident are presented: those of the bandit, the wife, and the samurai who speaks from the dead through a medium. Then the woodcutter, who has taken refuge at the gate during the storm, admits that he witnessed what happened, even though he didn't tell the whole truth to the Magistrate's court. His story is then recounted, the fourth, and very different version of the same incident.

Rashomon has a magnetic appeal because it is a puzzle. The end is neither contrived, nor does it offer an answer to the puzzle. It is a play of life, and of contrast. Although the historical setting is far away and long ago, it could happen today on the streets of one of our cities. Counter balance is present. There is violence, but there is also the cultural denial of violence. For instance, a samurai may take another's life whenever he wishes, and for whatever reason, but a wife is meek

and passive to her husband, and must never speak her mind or express her own desires.

Rashomon is psychological realism. The characters are real, and they are human, with all their faults and frailties; and herein lies the truth of Rashomon. Four persons witness the same incident and come away with four different views of what actually happened. Each view is truth to that person, and will be played as such. Instead of showing people as small and egoistical and ugly, the message of humanity emerges.

This production necessitates the talents of an experienced swordsman to choreograph the fight scenes. Since this was a prerequisite that needed satisfaction before the project could be undertaken, I have enlisted the aid of Terry Doughman, a veteran choreographer on UNO and Omaha community stages.

The presentation of Rashomon as a Final Thesis Project will be a challenge and an asset to me, to the University students involved in the project and to the UNO Theatre Season.

PRODUCTION PROPOSAL

Option II

Final Thesis Project

Alison Laurio

August 23, 1982

For my Option II Final Thesis Project, I propose directing Rashomon by Fay and Michael Kanin. I am requesting that the project be included on the University Theatre Calendar for 1982-1983, and that the production be scheduled in the Studio Theatre for the end of January.

The play is written for six men and three women, and is appropriate for a university age cast, as only two of the characters, the Wigmaker and the Mother, are aged. Both these characters, however, are past middle age, and into an older age group which is easier for a young adult to portray.

A single setting provides three separate locales. At stage right is a suggestion of the Rashomon Gate. A small platform at stage left forms an ancient Police Magistrate Court. The central part of the stage is a forest outside Kyoto. Although the Studio Theatre does not offer unlimited space, the script does not necessitate large playing areas for the Gate and Court scenes. The Studio Theatre is large enough to accomodate the center stage forest, and is a workable space for the staging of Rashomon.

Each locale has its own distinct lighting. The Gate scenes are cold and rainy. A bonfire is started by the characters for warmth. The Court scenes are brightly illuminated, as by sunshine through windows. In the forest the light is dappled, as if filtered through the trees of the forest.

Because the University Theatre Costume Shop has no oriental costumes in stock, costume construction will be necessary, as

five characters appear in kimonos. One additional kimono may be necessary for the Priest, although he may be costumed in a robe, as he is a Buddhist monk. Our costumer, Kenda Slavin, has estimated the minimum cost of each kimono, using the cheapest material, at \$18.00. She stated the costumes would pay for themselves in a short time, however, because of our present costume rental program and the fact we have no oriental costumes in stock.

There is no in-show music, but several sound cues are required: rain, thunder, the cawing of crows and the crying of a baby. All are easily attainable on record, and will be taped on reel-to-reel tape, making use of our equipment we have on hand.

I believe Rashomon would be a worthwhile addition to the theatre season this year. Set in Japan one thousand years ago, Rashomon appears visually different, but the play presents men & women as universally human people, with all the frailties and hopes common to mankind. In the final scene, the Woodcutter and the Priest say:

Woodcutter: But -- you heard it yourself -- I'm a
coward, a thief, a liar --

Priest: You're many things. A man -- like all men.



University of
Nebraska
at Omaha

College of Fine Arts
Department of Dramatic Arts
Omaha, Nebraska 68182
(402) 554-2406

August 31, 1982

Ms. Alison Laurio
717 E. Huron
Missouri Valley, Iowa

Dear Alison,

Please be advised that your proposal to direct Rashomon as a Studio Theatre production has been approved by the Dramatic Arts Faculty. The production dates will be January 27-30 and February 4-6, 1983. Auditions for this production will take place at our joint auditions for Second Semester productions which will be held on December 1-3, 1982.

You need to secure approval from the Graduate Program Committee for Final Project credit for this project. Please contact Dr. Margaret Gessaman to initiate this process.

I want to add that we are concerned about space limitations in the Studio Theatre for this production. You will need to work openly and carefully with your advisor and your designer to insure that the limited space does not inhibit your production.

Our faculty remains available to help you in whatever way we can. The normal resources of our front of house staff will also be committed to this production. A budget has been established in the Theatre office to support this production. While the figures may need to be adjusted up or down as the nature of the production is more firmly established, we have currently committed \$225 for scripts and royalties; \$400 for scenery; \$200 for costumes; and \$100 for properties.

Please feel free to contact me if I can help you with your work.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert W. Welk".

Robert W. Welk, Chairman

RWW/lis

AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Everyone who attended auditions Wednesday night is strongly encouraged to attend auditions tonight (Thursday).

Any people who did not read for the prepared auditions are encouraged to attend Thursday with prepared (read or memorized) material. If there is also a problem with auditioning Thursday, please see Bill, Bob, Doug, or Alison.

Open, cold-reading auditions begin tonight (Thursday) at 7:00 pm on the main stage for all persons.

Between 7:00 and 8:00, we will focus on reading Hedda people on all three plays in combination with other auditioners. Also, we will read mainly large group Inherit scenes for the first half of the evening. Around 8:30 we will break briefly and announce specific reading groups for Rashomon and She Stoops. Many will not be in these groups because they are being considered strongly for Inherit. Friday morning, we will have posted an Inherit call back list, a group which will do focussed, extensive readings Friday night. There may also be call back lists posted Friday morning for Rashoman and She Stoops.

We were all very pleased with Wednesday's readings. There is a lot of promise and your work has made our job already much easier.

Bill
Bob
Alison
Doug

RASHOMON

Priest.....Greg Bachmann *GB*
Woodcutter.....Bill Robbeloth *BR*
Wigmaker.....Tom McAndrew *TM*
Deputy.....Jesse Conyers *JC*
Mother.....Marilyn Berman *MB*
Medium.....Chris Riza *CR*
Wife.....Cathy Wells *CW*
Husband.....Terry Doughman *TD*
Bandit.....Wes Clowers *WC*

To all who auditioned: Thank you. Your readings were of such quality that the decision was a difficult one.

To the cast: Please initial the casting sheet and see me on Monday to pick up your script and give me your schedule. Thank you!

Alison Lanni O

DECEMBER

RASHOMON

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
12	13	14	15	16	17
250-49 gate Buckling 20 little pun 6-10pm	count + forest 6-10pm	Cathy work 6-10pm gate	23 off	29 off	25 off
26 counting 6-10pm	28 6-10pm gate	29 6-10pm	30 6-10pm	31 off	6:00-6:00 JANUARY 1
2 6-10pm	4 5-10pm	5 Terry? Bill?	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20

NASHOMOV

JANUARY

SUNDAY	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2</p> <p>11 AM Run through</p>	<p>3</p> <p>6-8 fights 7:45 Blanket 8:00 Act I</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6-8 fights 7:45 Blanket 8:00 Act II</p>	<p>5</p> <p>6-7 Chris 7-7:30 Jesse 7:30-8 Wes + Jesse 8-10 GATE</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Letting work 6-7:45 fight 7:45-9 gate 9-9:30 Jesse 9:30-10 Chris</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Letting work 6-7:45 fight 7:45-9 gate 7-9:30 Chris 9:30-10 Jesse</p>	<p>8</p> <p>10:00 AM Run thru</p>
<p>9</p> <p>4 PM run thru</p>	<p>10</p> <p>6-8 fights 8 Act I</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6-9 fights 9 Act II</p>	<p>12</p> <p>6-6:30 Chris 6:30-7 Marilyn 7-7:30 Jesse + Wes 7:30-10 gate</p>	<p>13</p> <p>6-7:45 fight 7:45-9 gate 9-9:20 Jesse 9:20-9:40 Marilyn 9:40-10 Chris</p>	<p>14</p> <p>6-7:45 fight 7:45-8 Wes + Jesse 8-9:15 gate 9:15-9:35 Chris 9:35 Marilyn</p>	<p>15</p> <p>12 NOON run thru</p>
<p>16</p> <p>4 PM run thru</p>	<p>17</p> <p>6 fights 7:30 run thru</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6 fights 9 PM run thru</p>	<p>19</p> <p>6 fights 7:30 run thru</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6 fights 7:30 run thru</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6 fights 7:30 run thru</p>	<p>22</p> <p>2 PM Afternoon Dry Tech 6:00 Tech</p>
<p>23</p> <p>8 PM Full Run Dress</p>	<p>24</p> <p>8 PM Full Run Dress</p>	<p>25</p> <p>8 PM Full Run Dress</p>	<p>26</p> <p>8 PM Full Run Dress</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Full Run Perf 8 PM</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Full Run Perf 8 PM</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Full Run Perf 8 PM</p>
<p>Perf 8 PM CALL 6 30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>FEB. 1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Brush-up 8 PM.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>CALL 6 Perf. 8 PM</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Perf 8 PM</p>
<p>FEB 6th 8 PM Perf 8 PM + 10 PM</p>						

SCENE BREAKDOWN

Act I

SCENE	LOCALE	PAGE	CHARACTER	LOCATION	TRANSITION
1	Gate	7	Wigmaker Priest Woodcutter	Onstage, above gate Onstage at opening Enters through forest	Light crossfade
2 A	Court	14	Deputy Tajomaru	Onstage when lights crossfade Onstage when lights crossfade	Tajomaru cross to forest
2 B	Forest	16	Tajomaru Samurai Wife	Cross from court Enters through forest Enters through forest	Tajomaru cross to court
2 C	Court	18	Tajomaru	Cross from forest	Tajomaru cross to forest
2 D	Forest	19	Tajomaru Wife	Cross from court Onstage when lights crossfade	Tajomaru cross to court
2 E	Court	20	Tajomaru	Cross from forest	Tajomaru cross to forest

Act I Continued

SCENE	LOCALE	PAGE	CHARACTER	LOCATION	TRANSITION
2 F	Forest	20	Husband Wife Tajomaru	Onstage, tied Enters from forest Enters from forest	Light crossfade
3	Gate	21	Wigmaker Priest Woodcutter	Onstage Onstage Onstage	Light crossfade
4	Court	22	Tajomaru	Onstage	Cross to forest
5 A	Forest	23	Husband Wife Tajomaru	Onstage, tied Onstage Enters from Court	Tajomaru cross to court
5 B	Court	25	Tajomaru	Enters from forest	Light crossfade
6	Gate	26	Wigmaker Woodcutter Priest	Onstage Onstage Onstage	Light crossfade
7 A	Court	27	Wife Mother	Onstage Onstage	Wife cross to forest
7 B	Forest	29	Wife Husband Tajomaru	Enters from court Onstage, tied Onstage	Wife cross to court
7 C	Court	32	Wife Mother	Cross from forest Onstage	Light crossfade

Act II

SCENE	LOCALE	PAGE	CHARACTER	LOCATION	TRANSITION
1	Gate	33	Wigmaker Priest Woodcutter	Onstage Onstage Onstage	Light crossfade
2 A	Court	34	Medium	Onstage	Light crossfade
2 B	Forest	35	Husband Wife Tajomaru	Onstage tied Onstage Onstage	Light crossfade
2 C	Court	38	Medium	Onstage	Light crossfade
3	Gate	38	Woodcutter Wigmaker Priest	Onstage Onstage Onstage	Light crossfade
4	Forest	42	Tajomaru Wife Husband	Onstage Onstage Onstage	Light crossfade
5	Gate	51	Woodcutter Wigmaker Priest	Onstage Onstage Onstage	

Set Expenses Budgeted	\$400.00
Set Expenses	\$263.37
Final Set Budget	+\$136.63
Costume Expenses Budgeted	\$200.00
Costume Expenses	\$191.42
	+ \$8.58
Total Set and Costume Budgeted	\$600.00
Total Set and Costume Expenses	\$454.79
Final Budget for Rashomon	+\$145.21

P R O P O S E D B U D G E T F O R R A S H O M O N

Wayne E. White
12/20/82

Set Expenses Proposed

Lumber	\$150
Bamboo Poles	\$100
<u>Contingency</u>	<u>\$150</u>
Total Anticipated Set Expenses	\$400

Costume Expenses Proposed

Fabric	\$50
Wigs and Shoes	\$50
Dry Cleaning	\$50
<u>Contingency</u>	<u>\$50</u>
Total Anticipated Costume Expenses	\$200

Total Proposed Budget

Anticipated set expenses	\$400
<u>Anticipated costume expenses</u>	<u>\$200</u>
Total Set and Costume Budget	\$600

492

people attended

Rashomon

(this does not include
ushers)

BOX OFFICE CASH - UP SHEET

DATE: 11/21/00

DAY: 11/21/00

CASH	\$ 99	TICKETS @ 2.00	78.00
LESS BANK	\$ 75	TICKETS @ 1.25	
TOTAL CASH	24	TICKETS @ 1.00	
CHECKS	\$ 3	TICKETS @ .75	
		TICKETS @	
DEPOSIT	\$ 27	TOTAL SALES	\$ 78

PREPAID		PREPAID	
3 TICKETS USED @ 3	\$ 9	TICKETS SOLD	
SEASON TICKETS USED		SEASON TICKETS SOLD	
FAC/STAFF @ 1.25	—	FAC/STAFF @	
STUDENT @ 1.00	—	STUDENT @	
S.C. @ .75	—	S.C. @	
10 PLUS @ 1.25	—	10 PLUS @	

COUPONS		OTHER	
14 COMPS @ 3	\$ 42		
TOTAL DEBITS	\$ 78	TOTAL CREDITS	\$ 78
OVER/SHORT			
REPORTED BY: CD-L		NO SHOWS	0

SHIFT CHANGE COUNT:

COMMENTS:

Gen-9

69
30
—
99

WALK ups-

4

House 2B

CASH	\$135	8 TICKETS @ \$3.00	\$143
LESS BANK	\$75	3 TICKETS @ \$1.25	16.25
TOTAL CASH	\$60	1 TICKETS @ \$1.00	1.00
CHECKS	\$19	2 TICKETS @ \$1.75	1.50
		10 TICKETS @ \$1.25	12.50
DEPOSIT	\$79	TOTAL SALES	\$175.25

PREPAID	
14 TICKETS USED @ \$3	\$42
SEASON TICKETS USED	
13 FAC/STAFF @ \$1.25	16.25
1 STUDENT @ \$1.00	1.00
2 S.C. @ \$1.75	3.50
10 Gen @ \$1.25	12.50
	\$31.25

PREPAID	
8 TICKETS SOLD	
SEASON TICKETS SOLD	
1 FAC/STAFF @ \$10	\$10
1 STUDENT @ \$8	
1 S.C. @ \$5	
10 PLUS @ \$10	

\$175.25

COUPONS		OTHER	
1 COMPS @ \$3	\$3		

TOTAL DEBITS	\$185.25	TOTAL CREDITS	\$185.25
OVER/SHORT			
REPORTED BY:		NO SHOWS	2 (Gen)

SHIFT CHANGE COUNT:

COMMENTS:

12 Gen

WALK UPS -

House
75

Washington

BOX OFFICE CASH - UP SHEET

DATE: 2/29/12

DAY: Saturday

CASH

\$126

36 TICKETS @ 3.50 108

LESS BANK

\$75

2 TICKETS @ 7.50 15.00

TOTAL CASH

\$51

16 TICKETS @ 1.00 16.00

CHECKS

0 TICKETS @ 0.00 0.00

19 TICKETS @ 2.00 38.00

DEPOSIT

\$51

TOTAL SALES

\$177.00

PREPAID

7 TICKETS USED

\$27

PREPAID

TICKETS SOLD

SEASON TICKETS
USEDSEASON TICKETS
SOLD

2 FAC/STAFF @ 1.25

12.50

FAC/STAFF @

16 STUDENT @ 1.00

16.00

STUDENT @

2 S.C. @ .75

2.50

S.C. @

10 PLUS @ 1.25

2.50

10 PLUS @

19 Prepaid @ 2.00

\$38

COUPONS

OTHER

0 COMPS @ 3.00

\$30

TOTAL DEBITS

\$177

TOTAL CREDITS

\$177

OVER/SHORT

REPORTED BY:

CJ-L

NO SHOWS

0

SHIFT CHANGE COUNT:

1.00 - 1.75 = 0.75

COMMENTS:

\$51

TICKETS

43

84

Rashomon

BOY OFFICE CASH UP SHEET

DATE: 1-30-83

DAY: Sunday

CASH	\$760
LESS BANK	\$75
TOTAL CASH	\$88
CHECKS	15
DEPOSIT	4102

31 TICKETS @ 3.00	\$93
8 TICKETS @ 2.00	\$16
1 TICKETS @ 1.25	7.50
0 TICKETS @ 1.00	0
3 TICKETS @ .75	2.25
49 TOTAL SALES	118.75

PREPAID	
4 TICKETS USED	\$12
SEASON TICKETS USED	
1 FAC/STAFF @ 1.25	5.00
1 STUDENT @ 1.00	0
3 S.C. @ .75	2.25
2 10 PLUS @ 1.25	2.50
8 prepaid	116

PREPAID	
TICKETS SOLD	
SEASON TICKETS SOLD	
1 FAC/STAFF @ 1.0	
STUDENT @	
S.C. @	
10 PLUS @	
18 group	\$36

COUPONS	
5 COMPS @ 3	\$15

OTHER	
-------	--

TOTAL DEBITS	154.75
OVER/SHORT	
REPORTED BY:	CS-L

TOTAL CREDITS	154.75
NO SHOWS	10

SHIFT CHANGE COUNT: 4.00 open 4.75

COMMENTS:

2 Ben

unc

Walk-up - 4

House 67

Cashomon

BOX OFFICE CASH - UP SHEET

DATE:

2/4/83

DAY:

Friday NIGHT

CASH

\$189

55 TICKETS @ 3.00

165.00

LESS BANK

75

17 TICKETS @ 1.25

21.25

TOTAL CASH

\$114

5 TICKETS @ 1.00

5.00

CHECKS

9

0 TICKETS @ .75

0

TICKETS @

DEPOSIT

\$123

TOTAL SALES

191.25

PREPAID

PREPAID

12 TICKETS USED

136.00

TICKETS SOLD

SEASON TICKETS
USED

SEASON TICKETS
SOLD

13 FAC/STAFF @ 1.25

16.25

FAC/STAFF @

2 STUDENT @ 1.00

5.00

STUDENT @

0 S.C. @ .75

0

S.C. @

4 10 PLUS @ 1.25

5.00

10 PLUS @

COUPONS

OTHER

2 COMPS

6.00

TOTAL DEBITS

191.25

TOTAL CREDITS

191.25

OVER/SHORT

REPORTED BY:

W. L. Y. M. C.

NO SHOWS

SHIFT CHANGE COUNT:

COMMENTS:

Gen.

W. L.

House
70

ashomon

BOX OFFICE CASH - UP SHEET

DATE: 7/5/83

DAY: Saturday

CASH	\$118	44 TICKETS @ 3.00	\$132
LESS BANK	75	25 TICKETS @ 1.25	31.25
TOTAL CASH	43	3 TICKETS @ 1.00	3.00
CHECKS	12	4 TICKETS @ .75	3.00
		TICKETS @	
DEPOSIT	55	76 TOTAL SALES	\$169.25

PREPAID

14 TICKETS USED @ 3 4200

PREPAID

TICKETS SOLD

SEASON TICKETS
USED

SEASON TICKETS

SOLD

19 FAC/STAFF @ 1.25 23.75
3 STUDENT @ 1.00 3.00
4 S.C. @ .15 .60
6 10 PLUS @ 1.25 7.50

1 FAC/STAFF @ 1.00
STUDENT @
S.C. @
10 PLUS @

COUPONS

OTHER

15 COMPS @ 3 545

TOTAL DEBITS

179.25

TOTAL CREDITS

\$179.25

OVER/SHORT

REPORTED BY:

JLW

NO SHOWS

8

SHIFT CHANGE COUNT: 4pm - 1.75 C912

COMMENTS:

Gen - 15

all ups - 10

Handled
97

Lashomon

BOX OFFICE CASH - UP SHEET

DATE: 2/6/85

DAY: Sunday

CASH	168	61	TICKETS @ 3.00	183.00
LESS BANK	75	15	TICKETS @ 1.25	18.75
TOTAL CASH	93	5	TICKETS @ 1.00	5.00
CHECKS	15	2	TICKETS @ .75	2.25
			TICKETS @	

DEPOSIT	108	11	TOTAL SALES	209.00
---------	-----	----	-------------	--------

84

PREPAID		PREPAID	
11 TICKETS USED	33	TICKETS SOLD	
SEASON TICKETS USED		SEASON TICKETS SOLD	
7 FAC/STAFF @ 1.25	11.25	FAC/STAFF @	
5 STUDENT @ 1.00	5.00	STUDENT @	
3 S.C. @ .75	2.25	S.C. @	
10 10 PLUS @ 1.25	7.50	10 PLUS @	

COUPONS		OTHER	
4 COMPS	42.00		

TOTAL DEBITS	\$209	TOTAL CREDITS	\$209
OVER/SHORT			
REPORTED BY:	CJ-Z	NO SHOWS	0

SHIFT CHANGE COURT:

COMMENTS:

ren 36

walkups.
23

House

84

not counting
4 wst

REC.

'Rashomon' Is Scheduled At UNO Studio

"Rashomon," which consists of four different accounts of a brutal murder in ancient Japan, opens at the University of Nebraska at Omaha at 8 p.m. Thursday.

The production will be staged at the Studio Theatre, Room 214 in the Arts and Sciences Hall, and continues at 8 p.m. on Friday through Jan. 20 and Feb. 4, 5 and 6.

Director is UNO graduate student Alison Laurio. Terry Doughman, Cathy Wells and Wes Clowers have the lead roles. Additional cast members include Tom McAndrew, Greg Bachmann, Marilyn Berman, Jesse Conyers, Chris Riza and Bill Robbeloth.

General admission is \$3. For more information call 554-2335 or 554-2406.



Rashomon . . . characters re-live the murder of a Samurai warrior.

Courtesy of Dramatic Arts

Killing of Samurai recounted

New play 'Rashoman' begins run

By Connie Green

The newest dramatic arts production, *Rashomon*, combines four accounts of an ancient Samurai murder.

This consolidation of traditional Japanese folk tales was written by Americans Fay and Michael Kanin in the late 1950s.

The three main characters re-live their own versions of how the Samurai was killed. The dead man's version is told via a medium. The final version is told by a surprise witness.

The production includes a cast of nine. Wes Clowers portrays the notorious bandit; Terry Doughman is the Samurai and choreographer; and Cathy Wells plays the Samurai's wife.

All four variations are based on the talk between a wood-cutter played by Bruce Graves, an insecure Buddhist priest played by Greg

Bachman, and a vulturish wig-maker played by Tom McAndrews. Other supporting players are Marilyn Berman as the Samurai's mother-in-law and Jesse Conyers as the deputy. Chris Riza portrays the medium.

Preview

Alison Laurio directs the play, chosen to fulfill her master of arts degree requirements. Laurio said that *Rashomon* "uses research to set a mood versus depicting a slice

of Japanese life." She said that the vivid sword fights are carefully choreographed by Terry Doughman and there is no danger to the audience.

The set and costumes are designed by dramatic arts junior Wayne White and show good planning of space and budget, while intensifying the oriental theme.

Rashomon opened in the studio theatre, which is located in the Arts and Sciences Hall, room 214, on Thursday, Jan. 27 at 8 p.m. It continues through Jan. 30 and again on Feb. 4-6. General admission is \$3. For more information, phone 554-2335 or 554-2406.



Rashomon, directed by Missouri Valley's Alison Laurio will be the final project before receiving her Master of Arts degree in May. Shown above are two actors in the Japanese play.

Alison Laurio directs Rashomon

Missouri Valley resident Alison Laurio is directing the daughter of Mrs. G. E. Harvey of Missouri Valley. Rashomon by Fay and Michael Keen at the University of Nebraska at Omaha January 27-30 and February 4-6. The play is being directed as a final project for her Master of Arts degree which will be completed in May. Alison is

the daughter of Mrs. G. E. Harvey of Missouri Valley. The story of Rashomon is one of classical simplicity. The scene is Japan nearly 1,000 years ago. The story unfolds a rape, a murder, and an ensuing search for the truth. It is a remarkable tale, for not only do the stories differ, but each

witness claims to have committed the murder.

Rashomon will be performed in the UNO Studio Theatre in room 214 of the Arts and Sciences Hall at 8 p.m. Reservations can be made by calling the Box office at (402)554-2335.

Rashomon To Open At University

"Rashomon," the story of four different accounts of a brutal murder in ancient Japan, opens at the University of Nebraska at Omaha on Thursday, January 27, at 8 p.m. The production will be held in the Studio Theatre, Room 214, in the Arts and Sciences Hall, and continues at 8 p.m. on January 28, 29, 30 and February 4, 5, and 6.

Directing the play is UNO graduate student, Alison Laurie. Terry Doughman, Cathy Wells and Wes Clowers are cast in lead roles. Additional members include Tom McAndrew, Greg Bachmann, Marilyn

Berman, Jesse Conyers, Chris Riza and Bill Robeloth.

Besides his role as a Samurai (or Japanese warrior), Doughman also will choreograph combat scenes in "Rashomon" which involve the martial art form "Kenjutsu."

In the play, witnesses tell four surprising and exotic versions of a violent encounter -- which results in

rape and murder -- between a bandit and a samurai with his wife.

For more information, call 554-2335 or 554-2406.

羅生門



January 27, 28,
29, 30
February 4, 5, 6
Curtain 8 p.m.

Rashomon
by Fay &
Micheal Kanin

College of
Fine Arts/
The Department
of Dramatic Arts



RASHOMON

Cast (in order of appearance)

Priest.....	<i>Greg Bachmann</i>
Woodcutter.....	<i>B. Ryan Graves</i>
Wigmaker.....	<i>Tom McAndrew</i>
Deputy.....	<i>Jesse J. Conyers</i>
Bandit.....	<i>Wes Clowers</i>
Husband.....	<i>Terry Doughman</i>
Wife.....	<i>Cathy M. Wells</i>
Mother.....	<i>Marilyn Berman</i>
Medium.....	<i>Christine Riza</i>

There will be a fifteen minute intermission.

The use of cameras or recording devices in the Studio Theatre is strictly forbidden.

Production Personnel

Directed by Alison Laurio

Production Design by Wayne White

Fight Choreography by Terry Doughman

Sound Design by Marie E. Angele

Asst. Director/Stage Manager.....	<i>Lori Hoffman</i>
Technical Director.....	<i>Charles E. Chapman</i>
Scene Shop Assistants.....	<i>Casey Ridlon</i>
	<i>Marie E. Angele</i>
	<i>Nancy Cross</i>
Costume Shop Supervisor.....	<i>Kenda Slavin</i>
Electrician.....	<i>Cathy King</i>
Shop Carpenter.....	<i>Casey Ridlon</i>
Stage Carpenter.....	<i>Larry French</i>
Hand Props.....	<i>Ina Weiner</i>
Makeup.....	<i>Michael Dowd</i>
Poster Design.....	<i>Patti O'Neill</i>
Business Staff.....	<i>Donna Cornelius</i>
	<i>Larry French</i>
	<i>Lori Hoffman</i>
Box Office Manager.....	<i>Connie Grant-Leanna</i>
Box Office Personnel.....	<i>Nancy Cross</i>
House Manager.....	<i>Mari Zaporowski</i>

Lighting Control.....	<i>Barbee Davis</i>
Sound Control.....	<i>Marie E. Angele</i>
Costume Run Crew.....	<i>Larry French</i>
	<i>Mark Margrave</i>
	<i>Kathy Schlott</i>
	<i>Trish Weaver</i>
Costume Construction.....	<i>Wayne White</i>
	<i>Lou Meyers</i>
	<i>Kathy Schlott</i>
Scenery Construction.....	<i>Jesse Conyers</i>
	<i>Nancy Cross, Mike Hinton, Lori Hoffman</i>
	<i>Donna Ledwich, Patty Mathews, Pam Monsky</i>
	<i>Joe Piper, Patty Rima, Mary Ryan</i>
	<i>Mark Schuh, Wayne White</i>
Lighting Crew.....	<i>Mike Brush, Jesse Conyers, Barbee Davis</i>
	<i>Connie Grant-Leanna, Hunt Lewis</i>
	<i>Lou Meyers, Mike Young</i>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chizumi Hara

Omaha Community Playhouse

The Season 1982-83

She Stoops to Conquer

February 25, 26, 27 and March 4, 5, 6

Part of the continued popularity of this 200-year-old play is certainly due to its accessibility, not to mention the good-natured fun it pokes at itself! Written originally as an attack upon the self-consciously moral sentimental comedy of its day, **She Stoops to Conquer** combines the sharp bite of earlier Restoration comedy with satire, farce, and wonderfully human characters.

Inherit the Wind

April 15, 16, 17 and 22, 23, 24

Even though it is patterned on the famous Scopes "monkey trial" of the 1920's, Lawrence and Lee said of **Inherit the Wind**: "This does not pretend to be journalism. It is theatre." The playwrights do not wish the audience to confine itself to facts or even to emotion. They want us to confront the forces of history which are shaping our lives today.

Director's Notes

According to Akutagawa, a Japanese short story writer, "The 'Rashomon' was the largest gate in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. It was 106 feet wide and 26 feet deep, and was topped with a ridge-pole; its stone wall rose 75 feet high. This gate was constructed in 789 A.D. when the then capital of Japan was transferred to Kyoto. With the decline of West Kyoto, the gate fell into bad repair, cracking and crumbling in many places, and became a hideout for thieves and robbers and a place for abandoning unclaimed corpses."

Akutagawa's note accompanied his short story "Rashomon," which together with his "In A Grove" form the basis for Fay and Michael Kanin's adaptation. The scenes at the gate frame the retelling of the different versions of a single incident.

Writing for the American audience, the Kanins focus on a statement of the broad scope of humanity. Rather than striving for authenticity of ancient Japanese culture, the production provides an atmosphere, supplies a tone, and sets a mood for this play which shows the humanness of all men.

Alison Laurio

The Department of Dramatic Arts, College of Fine Arts, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, is pleased that you could attend this event. This production and others like it are the means whereby students experience our curriculum and are offered as our outreach to the Omaha area and the State of Nebraska. We want to bring to your attention that you may further support our program by making contributions for student scholarships and equipment purchases. If you would like to help support us in this way or would like more information, please contact:

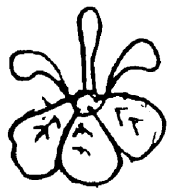
Robert W. Walk, Chairman
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska 68182
(402) 554-2406



RASHOMON
PRIEST



RASHOMON
MOTHER



RASHOMON

WIFE





RASHOMON

HUSBAND



NEW



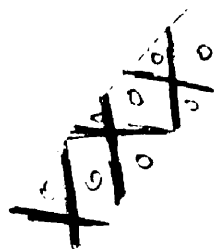
RASHOMON
WOODCUTTER

NEW



RASHOMAN

WIG-MAKER





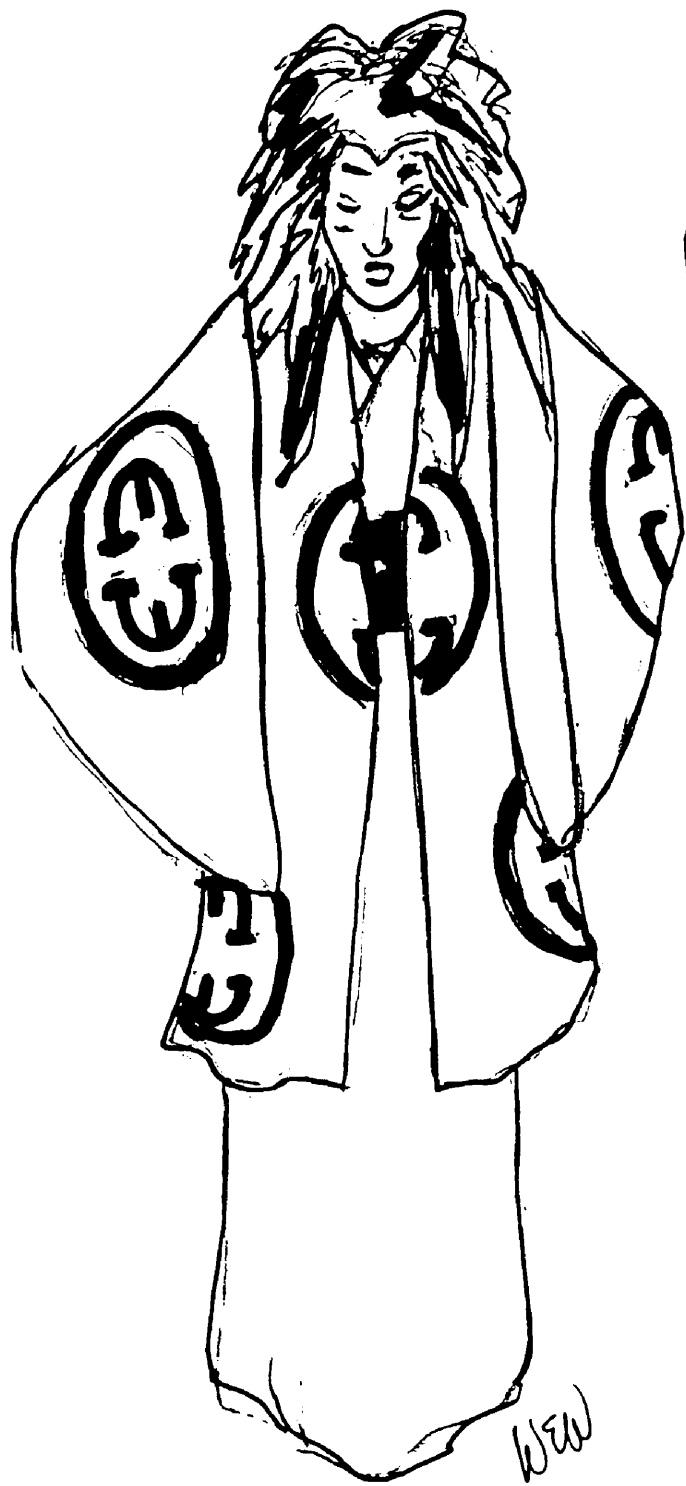
RASHOMON
BANDIT

WU



RASHOMON
DEPUTY

WEN



RASHOMON
MEDIUM





Rashomon audience held spellbound

Rashomon is a fresh, unique experience, that is perhaps like few plays you've seen before. The unusual construction of the story, the exotic setting, and not least of all, the brilliant production design, combine to create an evening of theatre that is somewhat unconventional, but nevertheless, spellbinding.

Playwrights Fay and Michael Kanin are extremely liberal in their use of flashbacks, which give *Rashomon* a scope that is almost cinematic. Director Alison Laurio deserves deep congratulations both for undertaking such a demanding project and for demonstrating dexterity in staging such a complex play.

The locale of *Rashomon* is Japan during some indefinite period in the past.

A bandit (Wes Clowers) is accused of raping a woman (Cathy M. Wells) and murdering her husband (Terry Doughman).

At the trial, the incident is related by those involved. Even the dead husband is able to give testimony via a medium (Christine Riza).

Each character's version of the incident is shown in flashbacks. And each character has a radically different version of what happened that day. There is also another witness who refuses to offer his version of the crimes to authorities. This flashback offers the most sardonic view of what transpired.

There is a great deal of explosive action in *Rashomon*. There are sword fights (choreographed by Terry Doughman) that are convincing to say the least. The small confines of the Studio Theater allows the audience to really feel involved with the conflict.

The make-up is skillfully designed and applied. The Occidental actors are believable in their Oriental aspects. The cosmetics of the women are most effective.

Wayne White's production design is great. The subtle lighting

richly enhances the plot's dramatic depth. This lighting is most poignant during the scenes with the priest. The limited stage seemed to increase in size due to the extraordinary sets. Perhaps the most impressive of White's work was the costuming.

White obviously poured hours of work into creating vivid, attention-demanding costumes. From the colorful kimono worn by Wells, to the rags worn by Clowers, White demonstrates a talent that is ingenious.

"Rashomon" is a fine production well worth visiting, especially for those charmed by the unfamiliar. It is an excellent demonstration of the range of the UNO drama department.

—Anthony McCoy

Consistency, too, proves elusive

"Rashomon" *** University of Nebraska at Omaha Studio Theater, Friday through Monday at 8 p.m.

THE ELUSIVE NATURE of truth and how it changes in the eyes of the beholder is the theme of Japanese short story writer Akutagawa's "Rashomon," adapted for the American theater by Ray and Michael Kanin.

Much of that truth is captured in this UNO student production of the tale of a brutal rape and murder, as recalled by four witnesses in its retelling under the ancient Rashomon gate.

Student director Alison Laurio keeps a tight rein on the two 45-minute acts with swift, authentic action when it's required and touching testimonials at appropriate moments.

Laurio's production is a black-and-white study in mood, atmosphere and tone that dispassionately focuses upon the strengths and weaknesses of humanity, leaving any judgement to the audience.

Utilizing the intimate studio theater format to the production's advantage, the

director has effectively spaced the visual action over a wide enough area to prevent the contained arena from becoming claustrophobic.

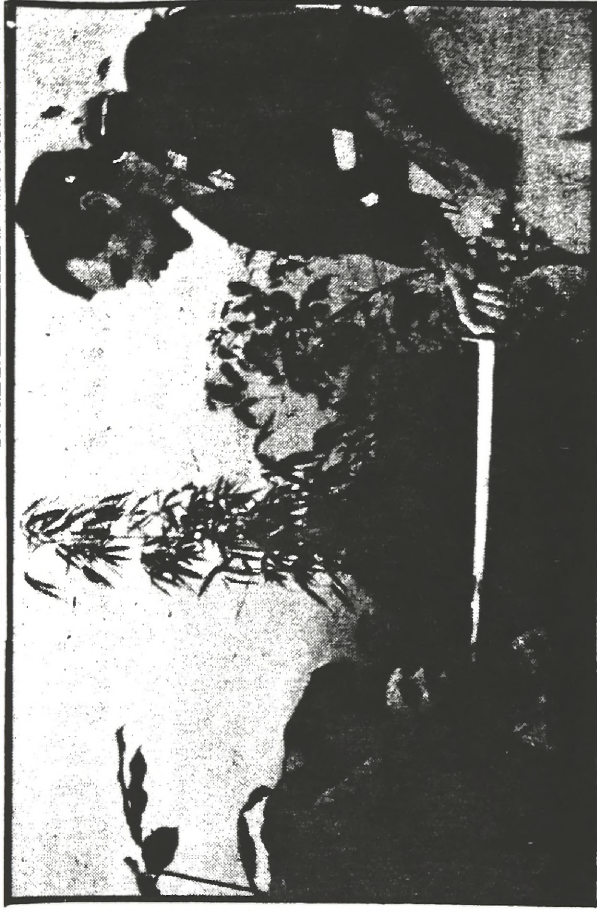
In fact, that action threatens to leap a little too close to the audience during a couple of energetically choreographed combat scenes by Terry Doughman.

During such moments, the cast is successful in creating an appropriate sense of fear and anxiety that permeates the air like the sweat of the determined actors working.

With the production's most flamboyant role, Wes Clowers not only exudes the sinister brutality of the ruthless bandit, but also finds the character's humor in his timeless human dilemma.

Cathy Wells, as the ravished wife of a samurai warrior, likewise instills her character with a demure sensitivity and an ironic callousness, as she berates both her assailant and husband, played with rigid dignity by Doughman, in the play's uplifting second act.

With the exception of Tom McAndrew, who gives an inspired performance as a



Terry Doughman (right), as a samurai warrior, puts Wes Clowers, as a brutal bandit, to the blade in the UNO production of "Rashomon," the retelling of four surprising and exotic versions of a murder under the forbidding Rashomon gate in Japan.

hilariously cynical thief, however, the rest of the cast in only adequate in their roles. push the promising material into the realm of a moving experience.

Chris Riza takes the greatest risks with her outlandish role as a mystic who conjures up the dead warrior's version of the murder, but ends up overacting like a sporadically enough to provide a work deranged trick-or-treater in a fright wig. thwhile evening in the theater—if not a Other performances remain safely particularly profound one. — Chris Olson



A painful recollection . . . Actress Christine Riza relives the murder of the samurai in the UNO production, *Rashomon*.

An inside look at UNO's dramatic arts department

Students gain experience by producing, acting in plays

UNO drama students will appear in two major plays and one or two studio productions this semester. They will also perform in touring performances and on KETV's *Crime Stoppers* segment.

Students spend weeks or months rehearsing and performing each production, according to Robert Welk, chairman of the dramatic arts department.

The 46 undergraduate students in the drama department can major in a professionally-oriented program designed so that theater students can concentrate on dramatic arts, Welk said.

Students can choose to work toward a liberal arts degree with a drama major, Welk said.

Degrees in drama have been offered since 1973, when the college of fine arts was established, Welk said. Drama classes were taught at UNO in the speech department before 1973.

Welk said the program has improved since he came to UNO in 1966.

The number of full-time faculty has increased from three to six, new production facilities have been built and older buildings remodeled and a greater

variety of courses are offered to students, Welk said.

Although responses from those who do come to plays are quite positive, said Welk, he would like to increase the size of audiences.

He said the people who regularly attend plays think they are consistently good.

Students help decide which plays will be performed, Welk said. However, faculty members make the final decision.

"The formulation of technique and the opportunity to gain experience through performance is a long process," Welk said. But he added, it pays off.

"Some of the best and most exciting theater in America is coming out of university training programs," he said.

Graduate student Allison Laurio chose to direct *Busbommes*, which ends its run this weekend.

The Gateway goes behind the scenes to learn more about the making of a play.

Follow the action, pages 4-6.

Drama

Bachmann prepared for his role as Buddhist priest

Every night for the past several weeks, Greg Bachmann has been sitting in a half-lotus position. The role Bachmann plays in *Rashomon* requires him to appear to be meditating and praying.

A normally active and exuberant person, Bachmann said it requires a lot of discipline to be able to become a calm and passive Buddhist priest.

"Everything I am goes into my character," said Bachmann, who plays the priest in the current dramatic arts production *Rashomon*. "There's a side of me that is the priest — that can be calm and relaxed, with an immense amount of concentration."

Describing what it's like to be an actor, Bachmann said he goes through a warm-up routine to remove tension before each rehearsal and performance. He stretches his vocal chords much like a singer does to keep his voice from cracking. To concentrate, he assigns himself a difficult mental task which keeps outside thoughts from intruding. One way to do this, he said, is to describe everything in a room, quickly.

An actor needs to make his emotions more accessible and to have a sense of spiritual well-being, Bachmann said.

Acting requires making choices about the character, he said. For example, does the character stand tall and open, or does he slump forward? The actor is constantly changing parts of the character, like vocal inflections and posture, to see which ones work best, he said. "A good director will trust the actor and offer suggestions. 'Keep this — get rid of that — Your character really needs to be nervous in this scene,'" Bachmann said.

Unconsciously picking his fingernails, Bachmann said it is difficult to describe the tension and anxiety he felt during his audition for *Rashomon*. "The audition is the hardest thing for an actor to face, it's like a job interview," he said, except that actors are judged on their body, voice and muscles. "It's yourself on the line. It never gets easy."

The other actors watch the auditions, which last for three nights, he said. The directors, for each production of the semester, decide who to cast for each role.

The first night the actors are asked to do a prepared scene, Bachmann said. The second night of auditions the actors read from a script they haven't seen before. Finally, there are call backs on the third night of auditions. The call backs give the directors a chance to decide which actor to cast if more than one could do the part.

"You hope you don't screw up. You hope you remember your lines. Your name is called and you immediately snap into control — total control," he said.

Control is important for an actor, Bachmann said. He described a performance at which some young people in the audience laughed when the lights came on. "I was so aware of them, yet I didn't lose control," he said. An actor who is not controlled might snap back at a rude audience, Bachmann said.

"The audition is the hardest thing for an actor to face, it's like a job interview . . . it's yourself on the line. It never gets easy."

Another time, the lights came on before the characters were in place on the stage, he said. "We just slipped into our characters and moved into place. The audience never knew that it wasn't planned because we were in control."

Bachmann intends to make acting his career. "I don't want to be age 40 and find myself looking back and saying, 'I should have done this,'" he said.



Greg Bachmann

Scenery sets mood

The largest production area in the dramatic arts department is the scene shop in annex 35, where Charles Chapman teaches scenery construction.

It can also be the noisiest. In a recent class period, students were learning how to use electric saws, lathes and welding equipment.

Chapman said he "isn't in the business of turning out professional carpenters" but rather he gives students some idea of how a set is constructed. He also teaches cost analysis procedures.

Construction crews for the UNO season come from the stage carpentry class and from students assigned to work on the crews. All dramatic arts students must accept crew as well as performance assignments as part of their curriculum.

Scenery is constructed for a production following a series of drawings including front and rear construction elevations, ground plans, and painted renderings of the finished set,

provided by the designer. Construction materials for sets range from canvas and wood to foams and fiberglass designed for the housing industry.

Studio transformed

During the production period of *Rashomon*, members of the current class and crew transformed the small studio into an area with the atmosphere of Japan with trees, temple pillars and gauze screens.

At the end of each production the set is dismantled. At UNO, every piece of reusable material is saved. Flats are numbered and placed in storage for use at another time. Wood is stored according to size. Even bolts and other fasteners are carefully sorted and saved.

Students can specialize in the study of the technical area of theater. Some students are employed part-time in a work-study program in association with the shop.

—Lou Meyers



Defending her honor . . . the samurai's wife, played by Cathy Wells, fights with the bandit, played by Wes Clowers, while her husband, bound and gagged, watches. Anthony McCoy

UNO drama department hard at work preparing for production



Carefully choreographed . . . the samurai (left), played by Terry Doughman, fights with the bandit.

Anthony McCoy

THE GATEWAY

February 4, 1983

Director works for Master's after 'blue collar tour'

Cinematic nature makes directing *Rashomon* difficult

By Anne Johnson

A director must be able to "see" a play before it begins, said Alison Laurio. "You must have something to aim for." Laurio spent the past five months directing *Rashomon* to fulfill her master's of arts degree requirements.

The play, which opened last week, is based on two Japanese short stories that were made into a film and later adapted to the stage by two American playwrights.

When she selected the play in August 1982, Laurio said she knew it would be a challenge to direct.

It is difficult to stage, she said, because it is "cinematic" in nature. Numerous flashbacks occur in different settings and some scenes call for realistic sword fights which are hard to choreograph.

"We actually needed more than a bare stage to build the Japanese fight scenes," she said.

"I had to know I had a good choreographer for the sword fights or I would never have selected the play."

Before casting the play, Laurio met with the set and costume designers. The group was allotted approximately \$650 for costumes, sets and props. She said they decided that not every detail of the play would be historically accurate.

"We wanted to set the mood and suggest Japan," said Laurio. "We didn't want characters to be stereotyped Japanese people."

During auditions, Laurio said she looked for three qualities in the actors: voice, movement, and physical appearance.

She said she had an idea about what each character should look like. She added that she tried not to take physical appearance into account because costumes and makeup can greatly alter physical appearance.

Laurio, who appeared in the UNO production of *Marat/Sade* last March, said being a director helps her better understand actors.

"You learn how people work with each other and see how different actors work when approaching a role," said Laurio. "You get an overall sense of the production."

The mother of two children ages 15 and 6 years old, Laurio received bachelor's degrees in journalism and theater in 1972.

Laurio said she "took the Woody Guthrie Blue Collar Tour," after graduation and lived all over the United States.

"I worked as a waitress, on the production line in a toy factory and as a secretary in the drama department of a university," she said.

Laurio returned to UNO in 1981 to work toward her master's and directed the UNO Reader's Theater last year to prepare for *Rashomon*.



Anthony McCoy

The best defense . . . Marilyn Berman speaks in her daughter's (Cathy Wells) behalf in a scene from *Rashomon*.

Rehearsals for *Rashomon* began Dec. 18 and were held everyday, said Laurio. Sword scenes were choreographed two hours before rehearsals began.

By the time "tech" rehearsal was held, said Laurio, "the actors were ready. They needed an audience."

Tech rehearsal, she explained, began the week before opening night and actors worked in full costume and makeup on the completed set. There is always a new problem and a director has a lot of headaches, said Laurio. But, she added, "it is never too late to change."

All changes, problems and insights about the play were recorded in a log, said Laurio. The log totals approximately 20 pages and is part of the paperwork required for the master's project.

She is also required to submit biographical information about the play's authors and plot and character analyses.

Laurio said she expects to complete the project in March. "When you're a director," she said, "there aren't enough hours in a day."

"I wish I could be three places at once."

Creating costumes for Rashomon provided challenge



Shape of things to come . . . Music major, Judith Bleker, helps out in the costume shop.

Kenda Slavin, the costume shop supervisor at UNO, said that one of the reasons she enjoys making costumes is because "you find out so many curious little facts about the past."

Slavin has 10 students in her costume-making class this semester. They study various styles and periods of clothing.

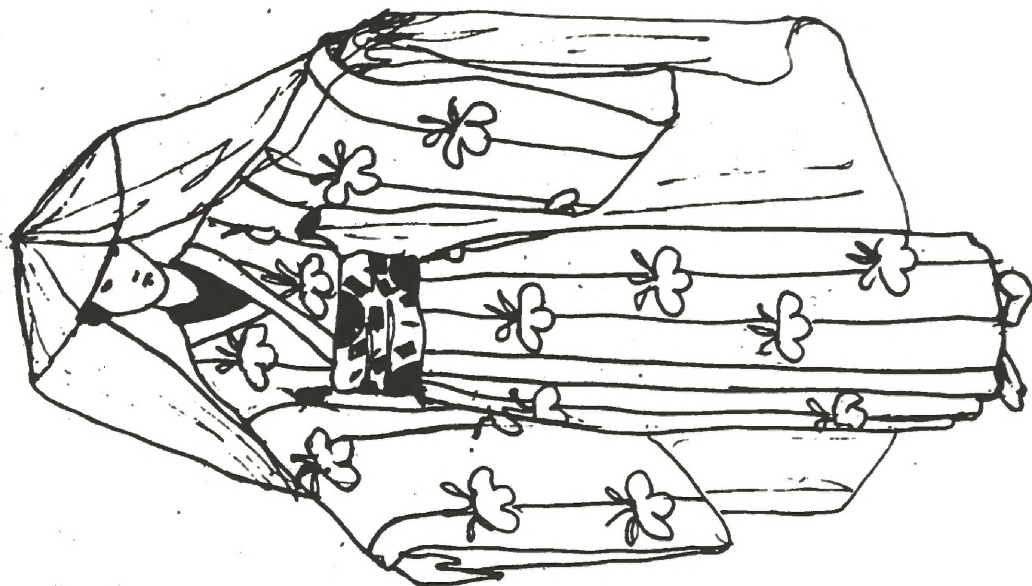
She said that all students of theater should have experience making costumes. She said she thinks it teaches students respect for the people who design and make the costumes.

Students in her class learn that costing isn't only a process of copying from the past, she said. Special considerations are often necessary. For example, dancers need flexible materials in order to allow freedom of movement, and singers need extra expansion room in the waist and chest areas.

Slavin, who owns a clothing design business and has been designing clothes since she was 9 years old, said the costumes needed for *Rashomon* provided a challenge because the patterns needed are rare.

The costume designers had another problem when preparing for the *Rashomon* costumes. A wig purchased for the actress playing the wife in the show "was awful," Slavin said.

An old wig about the right length was found, but the texture of the hair wasn't right. One of Slavin students suggested ironing the hair "like they did in the 60s." She was surprised, but it worked, she said.



Rashomon Wife

rope & 2nd before scene
leaves in forest
tugs 2nd step, by column D.C.
dirt by FIRE
preset Tay staff, sword, with pack turn
Pr staff & pack by column 2nd step US

Wet down WO.

Rashomon

ACT I Scene I

Rashomon Gate.

The introductory MUSIC [SOUND CUE # 1] dissolves into the sound of the RAIN, as the LIGHTS come up on a section of this crumbling and deserted edifice which once served imposingly as the entrance to Kyoto. Now it huddles wet and grey and forlorn in the downpour, and seems more than ever removed from the mainstream of the living city. A large wooden dragonhead, its crimson lacquer rubbed off badly, lies at the foot of the broken steps which are dotted with the white droppings of crows and with rank grass growing in the crevices.

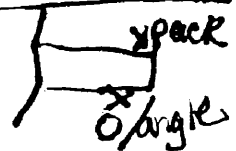
lights up

The WIND which signals the approaching dusk howls through the eaves of the gate.

wig in place (loft?)

In a dry spot under the sagging roof, a Buddhist PRIEST sits on the stone floor near a meagre bonfire. Beside him is an improvised pack containing all his worldly belongings. His staff leans against a rotting post. He seems more tired than his thirty-odd years warrant—a study in defeat—as he holds his dark kimono about him and stares off into space.

Priest seated



After a few moments, a WOODCUTTER comes running through the rain toward the gate. He wears a garment of homespun material, pulled up between his legs and held at his waist with a belt of rope. His handmade axe is stuck in his belt. He hurries up the steps of the gate, looking around, then stops short

Wood Behind par:

circle

togate

as he sees the PRIEST. [SOUND CUE # 2.] He bows respectfully.

— WOODCUTTER. (Out of breath.) Forgive me, holy one—but—I've run all the way from the town. (He indicates the direction from which he came.) I didn't believe them at the marketplace when they said, "The Priest has left us." I said, "You must be mistaken. He'll be back."

— (He looks down at the significant pack beside the PRIEST.) Is it true, then? You are going away? (The PRIEST nods slowly and his head sinks down into his hands desolately. The WOODCUTTER tries to speak but cannot find the words. He wipes the rain off his face helplessly. Then, suddenly, he can contain himself no longer. He bows again.) I'm sorry—but I must speak. I know it was like a nightmare, something to make the flesh creep, what we saw and heard in the Police Court yesterday. It made no sense. (Earnestly.) But to leave the Temple—your place here—that makes no sense either.

— PRIEST. What does make sense?

WOODCUTTER. (Shrugging.) I'm only a woodcutter. All I know is chopping wood till my muscles are numb and my hands look like horned toads. (He looks at them ruefully.)

PRIEST. (Half to himself.) Earthquakes—

WOODCUTTER. Huh?

PRIEST. —fire, famine, pestilence—

WOODCUTTER. These are natural things, like rain and sun. They're not supposed to make sense.

PRIEST. And yet they do! An earthquake's violence I can understand. (Rising.) But the savagery of men toward one another, and to themselves— (He crosses and stands looking off toward the road leading away from the city.)

WOODCUTTER. There's no more shelter along that road. I know it well. (Looking around.) This is a fearsome place—but it is better to wait here till the storm breaks.

PRIEST. (Turns back, his eyes wandering over their

squat to warm

Wo on step UR
of priest bow then speak

put axe by column
W starts to speak/stops
turns R
wipes face
turns back, bows

stands DR
lower step
looks

wood cutter
to fire
looks up

ACT I

turns back/nods
X up stairs
hands over gate

RASHOMON

9

refuge. His hand moves over one of the rotting posts.)
The great Rashomon Gate. (A piece splinters off in his
hand.) It crumbles like the people. [SOUND CUE
3.]

looks down at hands

looks toward
K.

From the direction of Kyoto, the TEMPLE BELLS
sound the hour.)

WOODCUTTER. (Looking off.) The Temple bells—they
sound far away in the rain. (Embarrassedly.) I myself
seldom go to the Temple. [SOUND CUE # 4.] My
clothes always smell of rotting wood. (Then.) But I've
heard them speak of you. They say you've taught the
people much.

PRIEST. (Bitterly.) You were with me at the Court
yesterday. You saw how well they learned.

WOODCUTTER. I can't understand it. Such horrible
crimes—rape, bloodshed. And then, in front of the Mag-
istrate to make it all—worse— (Shaking his head.)
(There must be an answer, but I'm too ignorant to know
what it is.)

PRIEST. No more ignorant than I.

WOODCUTTER. That's not so! You're a holy man—a
wise man—

PRIEST. (With rising emotion.) Am I? Then why do
those faces burn in my mind just as in yours—and those
monstrous words echo in my ears, calling for answers I
cannot give? (There's a distant roll of THUNDER.
[SOUND CUE # 5.] The WOODCUTTER looks upward,
uneasily.) (The all-seeing Buddha knows—he knows how
unworthy I am. (He sinks down beside the bonfire
again.)

WOODCUTTER. Please—don't say that.

PRIEST. My father was a rich mirror-maker in Kiwa.
He didn't want me to be a priest, but I wanted it. A man
doesn't look for his soul in a mirror, I told him. (He
turns away wearily.) Perhaps my father was right.

WOODCUTTER. (Stares at him, at a loss.) Where will
you go?

step

eyes meet
both look ↓

px to look at fire

W
P O

looks at W

sit/stare
at fire

wo
sit up
step

W up

looks ↓ at fire

1. look up

PRIEST. I don't know—I don't know—

WIGMAKER. (From above.) Why don't you go to one of the eight fiery hells? (The suddenness of the voice startles a few CROWS and they caw complainingly. [SOUND CUE # 6.] The PRIEST and WOODCUTTER, startled too, look up as the WIGMAKER's head appears among the rafters above, muttering. [SOUND CUE #

7.] Can't find a place to sleep in peace any more— (He starts to climb down with remarkable assurance for his sixty-odd years. He wears a faded and torn garment with a catch-all bag slung over his shoulder. His face is a mass of wrinkles and his body gnarled, but there is about him the alertness and resourcefulness of one who has learned to live in the jungle. It's hard to believe that he was ever, even at birth, anything but a cynic.)

WOODCUTTER. (Turning to the PRIEST apprehensively.) Let's go to another part of the gate, holy one. [SOUND CUE # 8.]

PRIEST. Why?

WOODCUTTER. Please—you never know what you'll encounter here.

WIGMAKER. (Coming down.) Caw—caw—caw! —at W.

WOODCUTTER. (Turning on him.) Hold your tongue, you scavenger!

WIGMAKER. (As he drops to the ground.) Hold my tongue? What about your tongue—and the hairless one's?

WOODCUTTER. (Angrily.) Don't be so low! This is a priest you're talking to.

WIGMAKER. Impossible. He woke me up. They usually put me to sleep.

WOODCUTTER. (To the PRIEST, protectively.) Please don't listen—

PRIEST. Who is he?

WOODCUTTER. He's a thief, a jackal—an old swindler!

WIGMAKER. How else can you live to be old nowadays? (To the PRIEST, with a mock-formal bow.) If you want to know—I'm a wigmaker.

bows

pokes head

after line - jumps down - 3 brushes off clothes middle step

booth door closed when wig down

stands

1 step between

ACT I

RASHOMON

11

WOODCUTTER. Wigmaker! With hair stolen from corpses!

WIGMAKER. The very finest corpses in Kyoto. Interred by their loved ones in the dung-heaps of the Rashomon Gate. The crows and I administer the last rites to the PRIEST. Now that you're giving up the priesthood, maybe I can make a wig for you—a long, fancy one. (The PRIEST rises and moves away, and the WIGMAKER shakes his head, grinning.) (Excuse me—) I'm not used to such tender sensibilities around here. My friends, the corpses, never take offense at anything. (Rubbing himself as if chilly, he proceeds to gather some stray pieces of wood and toss them on the bonfire.) There's one, for instance, a female—beautiful black hair—used to sell dried snake meat to the soldiers. Told them it was fish. She'd still be doing it, if the plague hadn't gotten her. I'm sure she'd understand. (Squatting down beside the fire.) Oh, you'd like them all now. They've given up gossip, cursing, stealing, fighting. Sure, they stink a little, but no more than some live ones I know.

WOODCUTTER. (Glances at him, then turns to the PRIEST.) He's as bad as the three at the Police Court yesterday.

WIGMAKER. (Over his shoulder.) As bad as I am? Now, that interests me. Who were they? (As they're silent.) What happened?

WOODCUTTER. (After a pause, grudgingly.) A man was murdered.

WIGMAKER. Just one? A slow day.

(After a moment, the WOODCUTTER shuffles over and kneels down beside the fire, too, warming his hands as the WIGMAKER fans the feeble flames.)

WOODCUTTER. It wasn't the murder alone. It was—how it happened, the things we heard at the Police Court—

WIGMAKER. (Indicating the PRIEST.) He was there, too?

WOODCUTTER. We were called, both of us, to testify.

bows, keeping
eyes on woodie

gait to gate (both)
to Priest

to sit at fire
Wo sit 2 step

stands
adds wood to
fire

WIGMAKER. Why?

WOODCUTTER. It was I who found the body.

WIGMAKER. (*Impressed.*) Where?

WOODCUTTER. In the woods. East of the city. It was late in the afternoon, at the hour of the ox. It's too hot these days, even in the forest, to cut wood in the middle of the day. So I wait until—

WIGMAKER. (*Impatiently.*) And you came upon this body?

WOODCUTTER. No. I mean, not at first. First, I saw the sedge hat, with a veil on it, dangling from a bush—

WIGMAKER. A woman's?

WOODCUTTER. Yes. It looked odd hanging there—women don't come into the forest very often. I called, but there was no answer. So I went on. And a few steps farther I saw a tortoise-shell comb on the path—and then a piece of rope. And then— (*He stops.*)

WIGMAKER. (*Eagerly.*) Yes—?

WOODCUTTER. And then—an arm. Just an arm, sticking out from a clump of bamboo shoots—the fingers all stiff and twisted. For a moment I thought it was some strange plant. Then, in the shadows behind it I saw the face, eyes empty and staring, the mouth gaping—

WIGMAKER. I know, they always look surprised. Death must be a lot different than anyone imagines.

WOODCUTTER. I ran—the brush tore at my legs and arms till they bled. But I didn't stop till I reached the police and told them. (*Mopping his face.*) And then, yesterday, they asked us to appear.

WIGMAKER. (*Remembering the PRIEST.*) But—what did he have to do with it?

WOODCUTTER. He saw them both, on their way—before they entered the forest.

WIGMAKER. Both? (*Turning to the PRIEST.*) Then there was a woman?

PRIEST. (*Nodding.*) Yes. The murdered man's wife. I passed them on the road from Sekiyama, in the early afternoon. ~~She was seated on a horse, he was leading it.~~ He looked so formidable in his samurai robes—his sword

at his side, a bow and quiver on his back. He looked so—
(*With a sigh.*)—so alive.

WIGMAKER. How was he killed?

WOODCUTTER. Run through—with a sword.

PRIEST. But no weapon was found.

WIGMAKER. (*To the WOODCUTTER.*) And you saw none?

WOODCUTTER. What? No, no—the hand, the face, was all I saw and all I wanted to see. I ran out of there fast!

WIGMAKER. Everyone's always running away from the dead. What can a corpse do? Take my advice—run from the *live* ones. (*Throws a few more sticks on the fire.*) Any idea who did the sticking?

WOODCUTTER. They arrested someone.

WIGMAKER. They always arrest someone. But is he guilty?

WOODCUTTER. It's Tajomaru.

WIGMAKER. (*Eyes widening.*) Tajomaru! Then for once they've gotten the right man.

PRIEST. I'm not sure.

WIGMAKER. (*Rising incredulously.*) The most dangerous bandit in this part of the country and you're not sure? If he were within twenty miles of any crime, I'd convict him of it!

PRIEST. It's not quite so simple—

WIGMAKER. (*Mimicking his tone.*) Not quite so simple. (*With growing anger.*) If it were ~~not~~ they caught, it would be simple enough! Steal a coin, a pair of sandals, a chicken so scrawny you can't get your teeth into it—pull a hair from the head of some poor cadaver who has no more use for it—and you're a sneak thief, lower than a viper. But rob someone of a fortune—kill, rape, plunder, loot in a *big* way—and soon you're a figure of a man with a magic name. Soon they're talking about you, telling stories and singing songs about you. Soon you're someone to be reckoned with—and "it's not quite so simple!" (*He spits on the ground disgustedly.*)

PRIEST. You weren't there—you don't know the things he said.

w 1/2 turn

wig

wo down to fire

wo P
wi X
X L + X
up/step

stands

X & R step
to wood

turns to P
sit

Dep 2 scroll
Taj bed
Dep Taj out

WIGMAKER. Well, what *did* he say—Tajomaru? (*Quickly.*) Not that I'd believe a word of it.

WOODCUTTER. (*To the PRIEST.*) He sounds just like the Deputy. Do you remember what he said in the Police Court?

WIGMAKER. (*Sitting.*) Deputy? What deputy?

WOODCUTTER. The one who captured Tajomaru. [SOUND CUE # 9.] He used almost the same words when he talked to the Magistrate. "Your Excellency," he said, "this is Tajomaru, the killer, the rapist, the plunderer, the terror of our roads and forests. As proof of his guilt—I submit—"

(*As the WOODCUTTER speaks, the voice of the DEPUTY gradually takes over. At the same time, the LIGHTS on the Rashomon Gate slowly dim out as others come up on the Police Court. The DEPUTY, a small but wiry man, is kneeling on a grass mat facing the unseen Magistrate who is in the position of the audience, and holding a scroll opened to a considerable length. Next to him, the bandit, TAJOMARU, sits indolently gazing upward, his wrists bound behind him. He wears a rough, loose robe of the period, his chest partly bared.*)

DEPUTY. (*Continuing the WOODCUTTER's speech.*) —I submit to you his record, a list of the crimes absolutely known to have been committed by him. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient time to complete it. (*He bows.*) . . . Thank you, Your Excellency. (*Rolling up the scroll.*) It was in the early hours of night on the river beach of Katsura. I came upon him groaning on the sand. He must have been thrown by the horse that was standing a few yards away. (*As TAJOMARU snorts without looking at him.*) . . . A white horse, Your Excellency, with a fine mane. ~~It matches the description of the one owned by the murdered man.~~ Also, a bow wound with leather strips, a black lacquered quiver and seventeen arrows with hawk feathers—they were next to him. . .

Dep kneels 3/3
Taj on 7 side
Dep sets the
wood spot
to tell story
back

bows
bows to floor
- pot scroll down

Wearing? (*With a glance at TAJOMARU.*) The same as now. Also a large plain sword. . . . No, there was no sign of a woman around. He was alone, and in great agony. (*Smirking.*) It must be more painful to be thrown from a stolen horse than from any other. (*As TAJOMARU laughs derisively, he stops, then continues hesitantly.*) As I said, I went over to where he had fallen, and—

TAJOMARU. ~~Tajomaru fall from a horse?~~ (*He spits at the DEPUTY, who retreats a little.*) There's no horse living can throw Tajomaru! I was sick—poisoned! (*Contemptuously.*) He captured me! (*With one foot, he kicks at the DEPUTY, who recoils.*) Go away, little bug, before I step on you!

DEPUTY. (*To Magistrate, protestingly.*) Your Excellency—

TAJOMARU. (*To the Magistrate.*) Do we have to listen all day to this puffing about what a great hero he is? You want to know what happened? I'll tell it myself.

DEPUTY. But I just— (*As the Magistrate obviously dismisses him, he bows deeply.*) . . . Yes, Your Excellency. As you wish. (*Still bowing, he backs off into the darkness and disappears.*)

TAJOMARU. Tajomaru thrown from a horse—Hah! He was a good horse, that one, strong and surefooted. I ran him hard all day. But it was hot—I got thirsty. Near the Ohsaka Pass is a stream—you may know it—the water comes down sweet from the mountains. But it wasn't sweet this day. Something must have poisoned it—a dead serpent, maybe, in the upper stream. I rode on an hour or so and then my belly began to swell. I got dizzy. I don't feel pain like other men, but this— (*His face contorts.*) Near the river bed I couldn't bear it any longer. I got off the horse and doubled over on the ground and— (*He stops, doubled over, remembering the agony. Then he shakes off the weak moment.*) Tajomaru fall off a horse! Only a fool could have such a foolish idea. (*As the Magistrate directs a question to him.*) . . . The man? Did I kill him? (*He shrugs.*) I know I'll hang from a tree on the execution ground no matter what I say. I

Dep
Counters R.
on knees

Bow

ban in like joke
spits

jumps to feet
kicks at Dep.

Dep gets to feet
before line

Bow

Bow twice
back up bowing
clasp hands

stands straight
& proud

can see you've decided the time has come for me to pay for my crimes—the ones I've done, the ones you think I've done and the ones you're afraid I might do. So why should I lie? (*Breaking his bonds in a gesture of strength and defiance.*) Yes, it was I, Tajomaru, who killed the man! . . . Why? (*He smiles.*) Because of a little breeze. [SOUND CUE # 10.] (*Nodding.*) . . . You heard it right. A little breeze that swept through the green leaves. If it hadn't been for that, the man would never have been killed. (*He rises, as the LIGHTS start slowly to dim on the Police Court and come up on the winding pathway in the forest.*) It was during the deadly heat of the afternoon. When it's so hot, a man's jaws stretch, his legs grow heavy— (*He yawns, moving lazily out of the Court toward the forest.*) And when your legs grow heavy— (*He stretches.*)—there's only one thing to do— [SOUND CUE # 11.]

(*The LIGHTS are out on the Court now and up full on the forest. TAJOMARU drops down on a grassy knoll.*) [RAISE # 10.] Stretching out, he scratches himself luxuriously, closing his eyes. There is a long, quiet pause. Then, from the depths of the forest, the HUSBAND and WIFE appear. The HUSBAND is dressed in the robe of a samurai warrior, wears a sword with an elaborate silver handle and a quiver of arrows across his back. His hands, the shape of his head and his bearing show breeding and position as contrasted with the gross animal virility of the bandit. He leads a small white horse on which his WIFE is riding. The WIFE is dressed in a kimono of brilliant hue, rich but suitable for traveling. She wears a large sedge hat from which is draped a long veil, not unlike a mosquito netting, that completely obscures her face. The HUSBAND, noticing TAJOMARU, stops suspiciously. [SOUND CUE # 12.] TAJOMARU opens his eyes drowsily for a moment, then closes them again. The HUSBAND continues, leading the horse. As they get closer to TAJOMARU, a BREEZE flutters through the leaves, blowing the woman's veil.

Smiles
ironically

X DL platform

yes
on I

XB area
DR stump

stretches out
using stump
as pillow
feet ↓ R of stump
Husb+wife
enter URB
wife 3 paces behind

H. Husb reaches
see Taj stops
go to wife a
X1. He stops
motions her
to stop

Scene 2B
H+see T, T look away
H end of log
land around
W to end
of log
H+W look at
each other
A look back
W-Z fence
H+Z sword, quiver, arrows

gate

"C"

tree

panel

stump

panel

"B"

panel

↑ Taj
Court

H+W

"A"

↑

↑

↑

↑

Booth

TAJOMARU's eyes open sleepily at the moment when the rippling veil allows a glimpse of her face. His eyes remain open as the pair continues across the stage. He lies there for a second, tensely now, then sits up, turning his head to look after them. As they are about to exit, he jumps up abruptly, simultaneously picking up his sword which was lying by his side.)

Ey! (The HUSBAND wheels, holding the bridle of the horse. He looks at TAJOMARU then slowly leads the horse back toward him and stops. TAJOMARU looks up at the woman, back at the man. Then he walks deliberately around the horse, examining them from all sides. The HUSBAND's hand goes slowly toward his sword.

[FADEOUT # 10.] Noticing the HUSBAND's action.)

That's a fancy sword. (The HUSBAND's hand rests on it.) Silver handle? (The HUSBAND doesn't answer. TAJOMARU laughs reassuringly, sticking his own sword in his belt.)

Thirsty? [SOUND CUE # 13.] (The HUSBAND watches him, non-committal. TAJOMARU takes a water pouch from his belt, holds it out in a friendly gesture. The HUSBAND does not move. TAJOMARU grins and takes a swallow himself to show that the water is not poisoned.) You have no water pouches and it's two miles to the next stream. (The HUSBAND wets his dry lips with his tongue, weighing the offer. Then he takes the water pouch, offers it to the WIFE. She shakes her head. The HUSBAND lifts the pouch to his lips and drinks deeply, then tosses the pouch back to TAJOMARU.) Going to Kyoto?

HUSBAND. Passing through. (He puts his hand on the horse's bridle as if to start again.)

TAJOMARU. You like swords? (The HUSBAND looks at him.) Silver handles like yours—gold handles—stones in them, red, green? (The HUSBAND tries to mask his interest.) There's an ancient tomb in the mountain. I came across it—dug it open. It was full of things like that. (Shrugging.) They're no good to me. If you're interested, I'll sell you some, cheap.

HUSBAND. (After a long moment.) Gold handles?

R> up counter
A 1 step
U.S

* to log

Husby Tay
eye la other
Husby mother will
to come + they
start. Tay
jumps up [they stop]
walks ↓ + around
Husby then back
to face him then
line (wife
looks down)

starts - 1 step
then stops

TAJOMARU. With stones. Red, green—

HUSBAND. (There's a moment—then he shakes his head.) No. (He turns to go, shifting his hand on the horse's bridle.) one step

TAJOMARU. (As though unconcerned.) All right—I'll sell them to someone else. (He starts away.)

HUSBAND. (Looks after TAJOMARU, temptation fighting it out with caution. Abruptly.) Where are they?

TAJOMARU. (Turning quickly.) Over there, in that next grove. (Crossing and pointing off.) See—beyond the bamboos, where the cedars are.

HUSBAND. (His eyes follow the pointing finger. He studies TAJOMARU narrowly. Finally making the decision.) Wait. [SOUND CUE # 14.]

He leads the horse into the woods, tying the rein to the branch of a tree. Then he comes back to TAJOMARU, who makes an obsequious gesture, as if to say, "After you." The HUSBAND turns and goes off through the trees. TAJOMARU starts to follow, then slows up and stops, looking after him. He turns back, as the LIGHTS slowly start to dim on the forest.)

TAJOMARU. As I said—a little puff of air. And I saw a woman's face. Or was it a vision? w/lf + val

(He moves into the Police Court on which the LIGHTS are coming up.)

I had to know. In that first moment, I made up my mind to take her. Even if I had to kill the man. (He ~~squats down~~, facing the Magistrate.) To me, killing isn't a matter of great importance. Blood is ugly to you "polite" people who kill with power and money instead of the sword. Sometimes you even say it's for their own good, the ones you destroy. They don't squirm or cry or bleed—they're in the best of health. But all the same—(He stops at the Magistrate's obvious reprimand.) . . . I am

pick stuff
up to go

X DC
+ points
up beyond
tree

Husb X UR toward
tree Taj starts
to follow
then moves
to court

Scene 2c

bow + quiver
left behind
screen UR

w/lf sits
* heard (DR)
fallen log
under panel
facing
DR
head
down

squat

start

husb ties self to
tree during court
scene

ACT I

RASHOMON

19

giving you the facts. Didn't I say I killed the man? You asked me why. I kill to live, to eat, to have pleasure. Whenever I capture a woman, I always have to kill her man. But this time, it's funny—this time I didn't mean to kill him. I thought if I could take a woman once without killing the man, it would be— *(There's a pause. Then he shrugs, unable to explain it.)* So I made my plans to get him out of the way and have the woman alone. It was easy. He was greedy, like all of them are. He went with me to the bamboo grove. When we got there, I seized him from behind. He was a trained warrior and strong—I had to take him by surprise. He struggled like a trapped tiger. But I tied him up to the ~~root~~ of a ~~bam-~~boo. *(He shakes his head ruefully at the memory of the struggle.)* Then I thought of the woman— [SOUND CUE # 15.]

trunk
cedar

Scene 20

(The LIGHTS start to come up on the forest.)

—all alone there, waiting for him. *(He rises, starts backing toward the forest.)* And I went back to her.

(The LIGHTS dim quickly on the Police Court as the forest LIGHTING comes up full. TAJOMARU turns, runs stealthily into the woods and crouches behind a bush. [SOUND CUE # 16.] The WIFE has dismounted from the horse and is walking among the trees, her veil still concealing her face. She's having a flirtation with an unseen bird. The BIRD chirps. [SOUND CUE # 17.] The WIFE answers him, echoing his chirp, and seating herself in the coolness of the grassy knoll. Silently, TAJOMARU moves to a closer bush, watching her intently from behind the masking leaves. The BIRD speaks again [SOUND CUE # 18.]—the WIFE answers. As the BIRD replies, the WIFE laughs—a bit of delicate music in her throat. [SOUND CUE # 19.] Suddenly, as if somehow aware of the eyes on her, she wheels toward the bush. TAJOMARU, caught, rises and emerges awkwardly.)

Log

pauses behind stump + water
wife/Reid-60

taj Court

How does he p 60

+ gaffe wife looks up
+ listens -
bird call was
bird call again
laughs
stops - aware
she is being
watched while
around to
see Taj.

What off

X 2 steps toward wife

20

RASHOMON

ACT I

Your husband—he says to wait here. He—he's picking out what he wants— (The WIFE rises and faces him, silently, as he comes closer.) There are many things for him to look at. Swords and—mirrors. It—it will take him— (Abruptly, she lifts the veil and stares up at him. He stops at the full sight of her face—delicate, exquisite—his words trickling off.)—some—time— (There's a long silence as they look at each other.)

WIFE. What have you done with him? (Tajomaru doesn't answer. Her eyes search his desperately for a long moment. Then suddenly she runs past him—[SOUND CUE # 20.] off in the direction in which her husband disappeared.)

Tajomaru. (Stands looking after her.) I could have stopped her— [FADE # 20.]

(The LIGHTING changes as he moves toward the Police Court, still looking after her.)

But that look on her face—the eyes wide and startled, like a deer, the lips trembling— (Facing the Magistrate.) It made me jealous—jealous that he could make her look like that. Suddenly, I wanted her to see the ugly sight of him tied to the tree—weak, helpless, looking like a fool— (Shaking his head.) I can't understand it, even now. Anyway—

(The LIGHTS on the forest are slowly coming up.)

I let her go to him. And I followed— [RAISE # 20.] (He turns and disappears into the forest.)

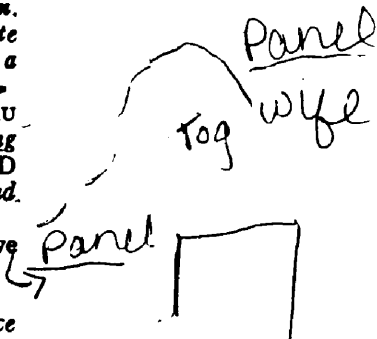
(The Stage revolves to show us another part of the forest—the clearing in the bamboo grove. His hands tied behind him, the HUSBAND is secured to a bamboo stump, straining ineffectually against his bonds. There is a rustling in the thicket and the WIFE appears, her sedge hat lost en route. Searching in and out among the trees, she finally stops short at the

Scene 2 E

X to Court

Scene 2 F

H gagged



Runs up — grey splotch
Stops
Hear Taj. Counter

they stare at each other
 Taj comes up behind - sword down
 She turns around to face him back
 up 2 steps
 Dagger fight

ACT I

RASHOMON

21

sight of her HUSBAND. They stare at each other—she, horrified; his face pale with shame at her witnessing his plight. TAJOMARU appears, coming up behind the WIFE. He stands watching them with an arrogant smile, enjoying the success of his plan. The WIFE slowly turns to look at him, then back at the HUSBAND as the significance of what this means begins to flood over her. Suddenly, she pulls a dagger concealed in her robe and leaps at TAJOMARU. He eludes her and she chases him, lashing out wildly with the dagger. Such a show of spirit and temper is more than TAJOMARU counted on. He begins to grow more excited as he laughs, leading her on, always managing to escape from her furious thrusts. Panting now, her hair loosened, her face flushed, the WIFE fights on, almost hysterical with anger and frustration. The HUSBAND strains in vain against his bonds. Suddenly catching the woman's wrist, TAJOMARU bends it until, with a cry, she drops the dagger. Then, holding her writhing body, his mouth seeks hers, his arms bending her to his embrace. The HUSBAND closes his eyes, turning his head away from the sight. Under TAJOMARU's lips, the WIFE struggles wildly, then gradually the struggle grows less. And then, after a long moment, her hand moves subtly along TAJOMARU's back to clasp him in a returning embrace. [FADE OUT # 20.]

(There's suddenly the sound of the WIGMAKER's raucous laugh from the darkness. The LIGHTS fade out and simultaneously fade in on the Rashomon Gate.)

Scene 3

WIGMAKER. (Enjoying it vicariously.) That's Tajomaru all right! No mistake. Even among bandits, he's famous for his lechery. (Moving closer to the other two.) Just two months ago, in the mountain pass behind the Toribe Temple, a lady of the court was waylaid, with her mother and her daughter. Three pieces of fruit from the same tree. Which one do you think Tajomaru picked?

moving in
 like sharing
 a secret

Taj sword ↓
 W 2 steps back
 Taj to W

Dagger Fight

RAPE

W:
 P x fire W:
 laughing + slapping
 knees
 ↓
 STAFF as soon as
 Taj moves off

(Looking at them expectantly, as they're silent.) The lady? The daughter? The mother? (He laughs boisterously.) All three of them!

WOODCUTTER. (Outraged.) Tajomaru's a savage—a wild beast!

WIGMAKER. But the women seem to like it. Especially the high-born ones with their airs and downcast eyes. Show them a man with sweat on him and their tongues grow big in their mouths. (He illustrates his point vulgarly.)

WOODCUTTER. (Angrily.) Have you no respect? To talk so before a Priest—!

WIGMAKER. He said he's giving it up. (With a shrug.) If he's going to join the rest of us, he may as well start learning the language. (The WOODCUTTER gets up, too, and moves away, watching the PRIEST.) All right, tell me more. Your story warms me more than this sickly fire. (With a grimace, he blows on it, fanning up the flames a trifle.) What else did he say—Tajomaru?

WOODCUTTER. Nothing!

WIGMAKER. Nothing? I don't believe it. Half the pleasure of taking a woman is talking about it afterwards. (Appeasingly.) Come on, he must've said something more. (To the PRIEST.) Didn't he?

PRIEST. (Slowly.) Yes, he said—more. He said—he never meant to kill. [SOUND CUE # 21.]

(The LIGHTS fade out on the Gate and come up on the Court—as TAJOMARU appears out of the darkness to face the Magistrate again.)

TAJOMARU. That's the way I planned it—without killing. . . . That's right, without killing the husband. All I wanted was the woman. (He stops, remembering.) I've had many women. When you think about it later, there's not much difference in them. Some fight you, some don't. But this one—(Puzzled.) I don't know—I was sure her body was eager, her mouth hot under mine. And yet, when I stood up from her, she just lay there—crying—

Priest stands,
turns R
on steps

W
R X W
Kneels + Blows
on fire
Sits Cross

turns R to
face Wig

Scene 4 n

Woodie stands
X From of fire
(Reaches out to
Pr then stops
1st step
Puts face
into
hands
elbows on
Kneels

(The LIGHTS have changed to the forest. The WIFE is lying on the ground, crying softly. The HUSBAND sits, his eyes tightly shut, his face taut with anger and humiliation. TAJOMARU strides into the scene. He paces past the WIFE, stops, looks at her impatiently, paces back again, turns, then crosses to her.)
[CUT # 20.]

Oh, stop that! *(He walks away, then turns back.)* I didn't hurt you—you're not going to die! *(After a moment, as she keeps on crying softly.)* Stop it, I tell you! There's your husband—untie him and go on your way! *(With a gesture of dismissal, he turns and starts to exit off through the woods. The WIFE sits up and turns toward him.)*

WIFE. Wait—please—

TAJOMARU. *(Stops and turns.)* What do you want?

WIFE. How can I live—disgraced in the eyes of two men?

TAJOMARU. *(Looks at her narrowly.)* What does it matter what I think of you? You'll never see me again.

WIFE. I'll always see you. *(Closing her eyes to the horror of it.)* Awake or asleep—this grove, this tree, this piece of ground—I'll see it all till I die. *(As the bandit smiles, not displeased with the thought, she turns her tear-filled eyes toward him.)* At least, give my husband a chance to avenge my honor—and his own.

TAJOMARU. Why should I?

WIFE. I beg you.

TAJOMARU. This is no place to worry about honor.

WIFE. *(With great difficulty.)* Give him a chance. If he fails, I'll—go with you—be your woman. *(TAJOMARU stands, evaluating her. Her eyes lower under his gaze.)* Even a bandit must have some feeling—some sense of justice.

TAJOMARU. Justice? *(He snorts at the crudity of this trap.)* He's a samurai, trained in the art of fighting. Do you think I'm a fool to let you trap me with pretty words—so that he can kill me? *(As she watches him, her lips*

Scene 5 A

Turns to face W
Starts to exit
DL

X1 step

X to S2
turns w/back
to gate area
turns back to
W.

Picks
up
Sword

tremulous.) Or could I be wrong? Are you hoping, maybe, that I'll kill him? Would that be more to your liking? (Provocatively.) There are always women. Why should I take a chance for you?

(For a long moment, her desperate eyes search his. Then, abruptly, she crawls over and picks up her dagger lying on the ground near them. As the HUSBAND struggles vainly against his bonds, she raises the dagger to plunge it into her throat. But TAJOMARU springs forward, wrenches it from her hand and tosses it away. With an exultant laugh, he grasps her by the hair and kisses her roughly. Then, pushing her away, he crosses to the HUSBAND, draws his sword and cuts the HUSBAND'S bonds—at the same time, leaping back, sword raised. The HUSBAND springs to his feet and draws his own sword. And he attacks with a ferocity demanded by his pent-up anger and emotion, [SOUND CUE # 22.] raining violent blows at TAJOMARU as though to chop him to bits in the first charge. But TAJOMARU defends himself well. His technique, obviously self-taught, is not as classically formal as the HUSBAND'S. But it is just as effective, springing as it does out of daily use in the cause of primitive self-preservation. It isn't long before the HUSBAND realizes that, against such an opponent, he cannot afford to exhaust himself in emotion and useless swordplay. All over the grove, they attack and defend, each in turn—tensely, grimly—both aware that they are fighting to the death. The WIFE, watching this fateful struggle, shrinks farther and farther into the shadows behind her. Finally, after an intricate exchange, the HUSBAND strikes a well-timed blow that sends TAJOMARU'S sword flying from his hands. Following up this advantage, he aims a head cut at TAJOMARU who, flinging himself away from the blow, falls flat on his back. With a triumphant shout, the HUSBAND extends his sword toward TAJOMARU'S throat. In

on knees
arms up

down
roughly

Sword fight #1

Taj draw
Sword by Hus.

x by wife
kick dagger
back by
log w ret

that long moment before death, the point of the sword moves closer and closer to TAJOMARU's throat. Even facing the cold steel, TAJOMARU glares up at the HUSBAND arrogantly and not without a touch of admiration. Abruptly, he tries to slither away on his back, but the HUSBAND is close on him, the sword point never leaving his throat. As TAJOMARU's muscles seem to go limp in apparent resignation, the HUSBAND takes a solid stance and raises the sword for the finishing blow. But TAJOMARU, with animal-like cunning, swiftly grabs both his legs and slams him to the ground. The sword flies from the HUSBAND's grasp. There's a wildly desperate scramble, accompanied by grunts and shouts, as each tries to reach the weapon and prevent the other from doing so. TAJOMARU gets to his feet, is tripped by the HUSBAND who crawls for the sword. But TAJOMARU recovers in time to run over and shove the HUSBAND into a clump of bamboo just as he's reaching for the sword. [FADE # 22.] Panting, TAJOMARU picks up the weapon himself. [SOUND CUE # 23.] raises it high over his head and plunges it down to its fatal conclusion. There's a chilling cry and a gasp from the bamboo clump. Then silence. TAJOMARU straightens slowly, struggling for breath, and stands for a moment looking down at the dead man. Then, coming back to the Center of the clearing, he looks around for the wife, but she is nowhere in sight. He turns slowly and starts toward the Court.

w take dagger
offst.

He fought very well.

(The LIGHTS fade out on the forest and come up on the Police Court as TAJOMARU steps into it, facing the Magistrate.)

Too well. Trained warriors should fight other trained warriors. In the jungle, they haven't got a chance. (Appreciatively.) Still, he was the only man who ever

X to Court
panting
Scene
5B

off

crossed swords with Tajomaru more than fifteen times. . . . The woman? *(He shrugs, sitting on the floor, indifferently.)* How do I know? She must have run away—she was nowhere around. ~~I found her horse~~ grazing on the path, so I took it. And I sold her dagger for drinks. *Lots of drinks—it had a mother-of-pearl handle. (He laughs ironically. Then, at a question from the Magistrate, he shakes his head.)* . . . No, I didn't look for her. It must have been her temper that attracted me. But she was—just a woman, after all.

(The LIGHTS darken on the Police Court and come up on the Rashomon Gate. The THREE MEN are huddled around the fire.)

WIGMAKER. He didn't look for her— *(He snorts.)* No wonder. One of these days they'll find her, face down, in a gully.

WOODCUTTER. What do you mean?

WIGMAKER. What's another killing to a man like Tajomaru?

PRIEST. No, he didn't kill her.

WOODCUTTER. The woman appeared at the Police Court.

WIGMAKER. *(Stops laughing.)* She appeared?

WOODCUTTER. The police found her—near a shrine, not far away. She was hiding there.

WIGMAKER. Well, she won't have to hide any more. With Tajomaru's confession and with her there to accuse him, he'll hang before morning. *(There's an oddly-human CAWING SOUND.)* [SOUND CUE # 24.]

WOODCUTTER. *(Startled.)* What's that noise?

WIGMAKER. *(Looking upward.)* The crows. They love to hear about hangings. *(He laughs.)*

PRIEST. But the wife—she *didn't* accuse him. She told a completely different story.

WIGMAKER. Different? How could it be different? Tajomaru confessed, didn't he?

PRIEST. It's odd, but I found her not at all as Tajo-

hus - dear sword
ropes

ropes
Scene 6

P
Wo
X
Wi

sits down R
by fire
warming
hands

P
Wo X
W & M out

Sits by fire
(as Scene 1)

maru described her. [SOUND CUE # 25.] Nothing of worldliness, of vanity—of temper. Watching her there, I saw a face so delicate and defenseless—the eyes, like those of a bird with a broken wing you hold in your hand—

(As he describes the WIFE, a SPOTLIGHT fades in, pinpointing her face. Slowly, the LIGHTS fade out on the Rashomon Gate and come up on the rest of the Police Court. The WIFE is sitting on the mat, staring emptily. Kneeling beside her is an elderly WOMAN who's bowing to the Magistrate.)

MOTHER. . . . Yes, Your Excellency. This is my daughter, Kinume—my only daughter—my poor child who stares at me with vacant eyes— *(Nodding resignedly.)* I can see it in your face—you're surprised to see a beautiful lotus risen from such a muddy pond. The Goddess of Fertility was good to me. Seven years I prayed to her, seven childless years. And in the eighth year, in the month of the cherry-flowers—Kinume was born. Like a cherry-flower herself, tiny and delicate and fragrant in my arms. *(Proudly.)* And I always kept her so. Not like the other children in their commonplace robes, but in a long-sleeved, many-colored dress of rare silk, her hair caught up with a tortoise comb. Each morning she went to the writing-school—never stumbling or dirtying her dainty hands—carrying her copy-books with such grace all eyes turned to watch— *(Brought back abruptly by the Magistrate, she bows.)* . . . Forgive me, Your Excellency. But, seeing my daughter again, I— *(She nods.)* . . . Yes, it is so. The dead man I looked upon was her husband. His name was Takehiko. He was a samurai in the town of Kofu—a very noble man, very rich. In the funeral procession, I will carry a cage of birds and set them free to remind everyone of his mercy and kindness. I'm sure he did nothing to bring such a horrible death on himself. *(Shaking her head.)* Horrible! I hope you'll bring the villain who murdered him to justice. These

Scene 7

A

P
W's

W, (head down)

wife kneeling
mother-kneeling
R.

Hold "baby"

Moth. stand

bandits who roam our lands and prey upon us like wild beasts—they should be *dealt* with like wild beasts! (*Listening.*) . . . *When*, Your Excellency? Four years ago they were married. It was a big wedding—the joining of two fine families. (*Confidently.*) You have only to look at her to understand that my daughter was much sought-after. She had many offers, all of very high rank. But Takehiko was the most eager—and the most worthy. Even so, she was very proud—I had to *persuade* her to marry him—

WIFE. (*Abruptly.*) Have you no shame? (*The MOTHER turns, startled to face her daughter's tortured eyes.*) To stand in the presence of death—and still have vanity?

MOTHER. (*Turning to the Magistrate, nervously.*) You must excuse her, Your Excellency. Her mind is still unclear—the shock of her ordeal—

WIFE. (*To the Magistrate.*) My husband was a samurai in Kofu. And my mother was a maid-servant in his house. (*There is a moment, then the MOTHER lowers her head.*)

MOTHER. (*Brokenly.*) What does it matter if it pleases me to tickle myself with small fancies? It hurts no one.

WIFE. (*It is no time for fancies—even small ones.*) (*Turning to the Magistrate.*) She was a good and trusted servant. That's also something to be proud of. Very often I helped her—drew the water from the well and stirred it round with pine leaves, brought it in a crystal bowl for his bedchamber. From the time I was a child, I learned to follow the gold threads in his robe with my needle. And with my eyes I watched him—and loved him—never thinking, never daring to think it was possible. It seemed he never looked at me, except as you look at a window and see past it. [SOUND CUE # 26.] And then, one day—(*Her face reflects the memory.*) I wore a flower in my hair—a red peony. He reached out his hand and touched it. I remember how my cheeks burned and my mouth grew dry— (*Fighting back the rush of tears.*) I tried to be the wife he wanted—a samurai's wife. The

To Mother

Turns to mag-

step back
head down
into knees

R to Mother

H to free
tag out

to H
swords
set

clothes I wore, he chose. I learned to walk, to talk, to hold the rice bowl as he wished. I lay at his side at night afraid to sleep so that I shouldn't waken and find it all a dream. *(Her lips tremble.)* A dream— *(She puts her hands to her face, sobbing. Finally, as if by the urging of the Magistrate, she gets control of herself.)* . . . I know, Your Excellency. And I'll try to talk calmly. I'll try to remember it all—as it happened. *(She continues strainedly.)* When the bandit had—finished with me, he strutted about like a peacock, describing his many conquests, comparing me to the others in low, vile language. *(Shaking her head.)* For my husband, how terrible it must have been—bound, helpless. Even now, I can still hear the bandit's laughter—

(She pulls herself to her feet, her hands going to her ears to shut out the sound as TAJOMARU'S laughter is heard from the darkness. She moves backward toward the clearing, as the LIGHTS change from the Court to the forest.)

(Falling to her knees at the edge of the clearing.) I can still hear his hateful words—

(The HUSBAND sits, tied to the bamboo stump—his face tense and pale, his eyes tightly shut. TAJOMARU is leaning against a tree, gulping wine from a small goatskin. He has evidently had enough to be boisterous—and dangerous. As he drinks, some of the wine spills down his bare chest and spatters his garment. He wipes his mouth with a hairy forearm, taking a few steps in the direction of the WIFE.)
[FADE OUT # 26.]

TAJOMARU. Ey—you! Know who I am? Tajomaru! *(Bellowing, as she doesn't react.)* Don't you have ears? I said—Tajomaru! Where do you come from that you haven't heard of Tajomaru? *(He glares at her, then lets out a short, hard laugh.)* Well, you've heard of it now.

mother kneels
w/ arm around
her—
m remove arm (?)

mother takes hands
(wife can use to
stand)

stumbling as if
to crumble
falls to knees
OR of tree

Stand

Sit

Scene
7B

(He raises the goatskin pouch to his lips again. It's empty. Annoyed, he tosses it aside and, leaning against a tree, pulls a peach out from a fold of his garment.) You can boast about it when you're an old hag—(He bites into the fruit noisily.)—that you were once raped by the famous Tajomaru, the fisherman's son who owns the forest! (The mouthful of peach is rotten. He grimaces and spits it out. Drawing his sword, he severs the rotten part of the peach in his hand, cleaves the remainder into his mouth.) And don't look so—outraged. In your whole life it may be the only thing you'll ever remember. (Wiping his sticky hand on his garment, he turns and surveys the HUSBAND—nudges him with his foot, disdainfully.) You—like swords, eh? With gold handles. And jewels—red, green. Your fat tongue hung out, didn't it? (Scowling darkly.) Well, Tajomaru always keep a promise. Here's a sword for you! (He raises his sword as if to kill him with one blow.)

WIFE. (Suddenly screaming.) No! (She springs up and runs wildly toward TAJOMARU. He turns, directing his sword toward her. She stops, as close to him as she dares. Their eyes hold for a moment.)

TAJOMARU. Why not? (With brutish humor.) I'll only do you a favor by killing him.

WIFE. (Full of loathing.) You—animal! (The smile fades from TAJOMARU's face. In swift anger, he extends the sword menacingly toward the WIFE's heart as she stands facing him. There's a long, dangerous moment. Then, slowly, his arm relaxes, the sword lowering.)

TAJOMARU. Yes, I am an animal. (With the point of his sword, he lifts the hem of her robe a few inches and lets it fall, contemptuously.) A pity you're not. (Then, without warning, he turns and goes off into the forest. For a long pause, the WIFE stands there, almost unable to believe it.)

WIFE. He's gone— (She runs quickly to her husband, dropping to her knees and drawing his sword.) He's gone—and we're still alive! (Suddenly, she is overcome by hysterical sobs and laughter, and it is with difficulty

X pick up sword

X to ft of
husb.
behind w.
nudges w/foot twice

Counts
to meet her
DC of tree
wife back steps
Taj continues
exits / stop

~~that she collects herself enough to cut his bonds.) For-~~
~~give me—it's only because I'm so grateful—~~ *(She takes*
~~one of his hands in hers, raising it tenderly to her cheek.)~~
 I watched your hands cutting against the rope till the
 blood came. How horrible it must have been for you, my
 husband. But I want you to know—~~*(Leaning against his*~~
~~shoulder.)~~ he couldn't hurt me—all his coarseness, all
 his brutality—because I thought only of our life to-
 gether. He couldn't touch that. ~~*(Her arms creep about*~~
~~his neck.)~~ I'll forget it, my love. I promise you. And
 we'll go on as we—~~*(She stops as her eyes meet his for*~~
~~the first time. Her arms drop slowly from his neck. She~~
~~stares at him, then backs away.)~~ Why do you look at me
 like that? ~~*(He doesn't answer or move—just looks at her*~~
~~with cold, silent contempt.)~~ Your eyes—~~*(Backing farther*~~
~~away.)~~ What is that I see in them? ~~*(Shaking her head in*~~
~~growing horror.)~~ No—you can't mean it! ~~*(Covering her*~~
~~face with her hands.)~~ I won't look! I won't! ~~*(She starts*~~
~~to cry. The HUSBAND sits, motionless, unmoved, staring~~
~~at her. Suddenly she rises, picks up his sword and holds~~
~~the handle out to him.)~~ Here—take it and kill me! If
 that's how you feel, kill me! ~~*(Anguished.)*~~ Kill me! But
 don't look at me with such—contempt—~~*(He sits, his*~~
~~expression unchanging, not taking the sword from her~~
~~hand. Slowly, her arm drops.)~~ Not even that. You are
 cruel. ~~*(She starts away, then turns to look back at him,*~~
~~helpless, bewildered.)~~ I never knew any man but you—
 I never wanted one. I didn't ask for this to happen to
 me—~~*(As he remains silent.)*~~ What do you want me to
 do? Go away and never see you again? Where would I
 go? What would I do—without you? ~~*(Suddenly her*~~
~~pride rebels.)~~ Answer me. Am I so low that you can't
 throw me a word—like a bone to your dog? ~~*(His silence*~~
~~lights the fuse of her temper.)~~ Answer me! ~~*(She moves*~~
~~toward him with rising anger.)~~ I am no longer the daugh-
 ter of a maidservant in your house. I am your wife! I've
 shared your table and your bed! Answer me! ~~*(His eyes*~~
~~continue to despise her. She raises the sword above him.)~~
 Answer me! ~~*(Hysterically.)*~~ Answer me! Answer me—!

arms
around
neck

hides
face in
hands

back on haunches
kneels

moves
back on
kneels

stands, grab sword

X back of husk
high

([SOUND CUE # 27.] The LIGHTS black out, and we hear the sound of her sobbing in the darkness. When the LIGHTS come up on the Police Court, she is moving dazedly into its light. She sinks to her knees, her body sagging forward emptily. The MOTHER looks at her daughter with an understanding and compassion she has never known before. Then—awkwardly, tentatively—she puts out a hand to comfort her. At the touch, the WIFE's head falls forward into her MOTHER's lap. The MOTHER sits for a long moment, her eyes moist, gratefully stroking her daughter's hair. After a moment, she looks up at the Magistrate as if in answer to something he has said.) [FADE # 27.]

MOTHER. What, Your Excellency? . . . Yes—yes, I'll ask her. (To her DAUGHTER, gently.) Kinume, the Court wishes to know if you have anything more to tell.

WIFE. (~~Raising her head, dubly.~~) What else is there? (Then, trying.) I must have fainted. When I came to, I found my husband dead, the sword in his breast. (~~Lowering her anguished face.~~) It was then I knew I had killed him. I ran into the woods, deeper and deeper. I tried to drown the sight of myself in the river. But even the river scorned me. (~~She looks up at the Magistrate in poignant appeal.~~) I can't be that worthless, can I? (The LIGHTS have slowly dimmed out, leaving only her face in a SPOTLIGHT.) Can I?

[RAISE # 27.] Slowly, the SPOTLIGHT on her face fades out completely.)

CURTAIN

strike weapons, tape, faxes

15 min. 10:15 min.

lights out

hear her sob
X to court
to knees w/
head in lap
L of Mother

head into hands
then up w resolve
Straight ahead

Scene
7c
up on knees

looking
slightly up

pres. 2001-2
LB - by media screen,

[pres. baby / blanket (1-1)]

ACT TWO Scene 1

[SOUND CUE # 28.]

The time is immediately following the end of Act One. As the LIGHTS slowly come up on the Rashomon Gate, the RAIN is still falling. The PRIEST, the WOODCUTTER and the WIGMAKER are in the same positions in which they were last seen—the PRIEST and the WOODCUTTER obviously moved by the recountal of the WIFE's story. The WIGMAKER, however, is unimpressed.

WIGMAKER. (*Mimicking the last words and tone of the WIFE.*) I can't be that worthless, can I? Can I?

PRIEST. Her face—it's so hard to forget.

WIGMAKER. Aah—! (*A gesture of dismissal.*) So—her lips trembled, she cried. Tears are always women's weapon against men. And we idiots believe them every time.

PRIEST. But why? Why should she confess to a crime she didn't commit?

WIGMAKER. Who knows why women do things? Their minds work in devious ways. To win sympathy, maybe. See how your heart bleeds for her? She confesses to a murder, but—you can't forget her face. It's so pale and tearful and honest. And honesty is such a virtue—how can you think of hanging a virtuous woman?

WOODCUTTER. (*To the PRIEST, who has turned away.*) Don't let him hurt you. He's—he's only baiting you.

PRIEST. What does it matter? (*Wearily.*) Some of what he says is true. How can we believe the wife's story—since we heard the medium?

WIGMAKER. (*Stares at him for a moment.*) The medium?

WOODCUTTER. (*Nodding.*) They brought a medium to the court.

Seated

P

wo X wi

stand stretch

WISIT

wo p wi

34

RASHOMON

ACT II

PRIEST. To evoke the spirit of the murdered man.

WIGMAKER. So the husband spoke from the dead! (Eagerly.) What did he say? (He looks at the PRIEST, who doesn't answer—then at the WOODCUTTER, who looks away.) Was it so different, then, from what the others said?

PRIEST. (Half to himself.) The wife's anguish—how could that be false? (Shaking his head.) And Tajomaru, so contemptuous of the rope. Why should he lie—a man who's condemned to die?

WIGMAKER. And yet—if there's little reason for a man to lie when he faces death, how much less when he is dead? —

(The PRIEST drops his head into his hands, tormented. In the darkness a sound fades in—The sound of rattle-like BELLS being swung in a weird rhythm.)

(Coming up behind the PRIEST, with malevolent persistence.) The dead man—what did he say? [SOUND CUE # 29.] What did he say?

(The LIGHTS have started to dim down on the Rashomon Gate and come up on the Police Court. The MEDIUM, black hair streaming about her face, holds a divining-stick with a cluster of rattle-like bells at the end of it which she swings with wild fervor. Her eyes are closed, her face possessed, her breathing labored—the inducing of the trance like a fantastic ballet. Swaying, writhing, she struggles to establish contact with the dead man. When she does, the bell drops from her hand and she falls to the floor. The HUSBAND'S SOUL-VOICE, [SOUND CUE # 30.] hollowly sonorous in its passage from the world beyond, is heard as though emanating from her tortured mouth, though the lips only open and close empty.)

HUSBAND'S SOUL-VOICE. I'm in the dark now—in the

no 100
2 10/2

H, B, W out
+ 2 ropes, sword
to help tie

Scene
2A

ends
on hands
knees-but down

medium's
trance
to be
choreographed

empty, whirling pit of darkness. (Curses upon you.) Curses upon you who threw me into this black inferno—! ([SOUND CUE # 31.] As the MEDIUM lifts her contorted face, [FADE # 31.] the HUSBAND's agonized moan seems to come through her lips. [SOUND CUE # 32.] She gasps for breath, then finds it, as the VOICE continues.) I will tell you—I want you all to know—how it came to be. (The MEDIUM sways in her trance.) The bandit, after attacking my wife, sat beside her—on the dry bamboo leaves—

(The LIGHTS have faded to a small spot on the MEDIUM's face, and begin to come up on the forest. There, the bound HUSBAND sits, his SOUL-VOICE still coming from the direction of the MEDIUM. The WIFE is half-sitting, half-lying on the ground—her shoulders hunched forward, her loosened hair hanging down over her face, masking her eyes. TAJOMARU sits beside her, talking to her with quiet intensity.)

He spoke to her with a serpent's tongue—like a man who knows of women. And every once in a while—he touched her.

TAJOMARU. (His hand moves to the woman's hair. Huskily.) It shines, your hair, like the river under the summer moon. I sleep there sometimes, when it's hot—the river bank still warm from the day's sun—so warm your body needs no clothing. And the heavy scent of the night-flowers makes your dreams wild, and you wake up, trembling with desire—(The Wife sits motionless, giving no indication that she hears him.) But what do you know of things like that, locked in a bamboo box in the city, tied to a man of—silk? (He moves toward the HUSBAND contemptuously.) The samurai warrior! The proud blood of his ancestors has thinned to water with too much easy living. Can those fine hands bruise your skin when they hold you? Or that careful mouth—can it conquer yours? (He snorts, coming back to her.) Such

scream

Scene
2B

Wife & Taj - relaxed
embrace

H

H

TW

Wife & Taj - relaxed
embrace

→ sit w up
X to husb.
Taj up round off
face H.

men are made for women who have ice in their loins. (*Moving closer.*) But you are not such a woman. That's what I guessed when the breeze blew and I first saw your face—the cool skin denied by those lips, full and promising. And now that I've—tasted them— ([SOUND CUE # 33.] The WIFE raises her head. Face flushed, lips parted, she looks at TAJOMARU.)

HUSBAND'S SOUL-VOICE. ([SOUND CUE # 34.] My wife—my loving and gentle and dutiful wife—never in all our married life did I see her face like that. Never—never.) [RAISE # 33.]

(*With a breathless sigh, the WIFE puts her hand against TAJOMARU's bare chest, then her lips—slowly moving them up to meet his mouth. He pulls her into his arms and they embrace feverishly, passionately. The HUSBAND closes his eyes against the sight.*)

WIFE. (*Breathlessly.*) Take me! Take me away with you! (TAJOMARU smiles exultantly. He gets to his feet, lifting her up in his arms, and starts to carry her off.) Wait! (*He stops, looking down at her wonderingly. She turns and looks back at the HUSBAND, her eyes narrowing.*) As long as he lives I'll always be his wife. I can never be completely yours. (*Coldly.*) Kill him. (*There's a moment as TAJOMARU just looks at her. Then, slowly, he drops her to her feet. She points toward her husband with mounting violence.*) Kill him! Kill him! [FADE # 33 UNDER SOUND CUE # 35.]

HUSBAND'S SOUL-VOICE. Those words still roar around me like a storm, blowing me deeper and deeper into this bottomless pit. Have such cursed, such foul words ever been uttered out of a human mouth? Even the bandit—this wild beast of the forest—even he shuddered. (*TAJOMARU stares at the WIFE as she turns and moves back toward him.*) He looked at her, and something happened in his face—some dim stirring, some deep revulsion against the female animal who feeds on her mate.

X to wife in back bends - touches shoulders + hair

H+W freeze
Freeze
scream

wife sighs
inter-
Taj's
eyes they
embrace
husband
closes eyes
head DL

whisp

part
from
embrace
+ stand - he
pulls her
to feet
her up
X DC-R
between panel
+ log

moves
toward Husb
on 2nd Kill
Him

([CUT # 35.] ~~Suddenly Tajomaru grabs her by the throat and throws her to the ground. She tries to crawl away, but he stands astride her.~~)

TAJOMARU. (To the HUSBAND.) What do you want me to do with her? Cut her black heart out? Or spare her? (As the WIFE struggles, he puts his foot on her back stopping her.) Whatever you say—I'll do it— (The HUSBAND turns his face away, moved by TAJOMARU's unexpected sensitivity. TAJOMARU takes his foot off the WIFE and comes toward the HUSBAND.) Come, tell me. It's up to you. (The WIFE scrambles to her feet and runs for her life, off into the woods. TAJOMARU wheels and starts after her—but he stops abruptly at the edge of the clearing as her screams are heard disappearing through the woods. Turning back.) Let her go. Her screams will bring someone from the road. (With sudden decision.) The devil take both of you—I'd better look out for myself. (He starts to go off in the opposite direction from the WIFE, but stops, looking back at the HUSBAND. Quickly, he crosses to him and cuts his bonds.) We're both better off without her. (He exits.)

(The HUSBAND's arms sink to his sides. He sits there alone, motionless.)

HUSBAND'S SOUL-VOICE. [SOUND CUE # 36.] It was quiet—for a long time. Then I heard someone sobbing. Someone sobbing—who could it be? (The HUSBAND's eyes are filled with tears. Suddenly he bends forward, hiding his face, racked with quiet sobbing—a man whose life, whose hopes, whose pride are gone. Rising finally, he moves about blindly, then leans his head against a tree, fighting to regain the control which is the rule of his life. When he finally raises his head, his face is again impassive, inscrutable. He draws his sword, looks at it with silent resolution. As he raises it above his breast, the LIGHTS on the forest black out.)

belly on middle of Panel

She Screams "no"

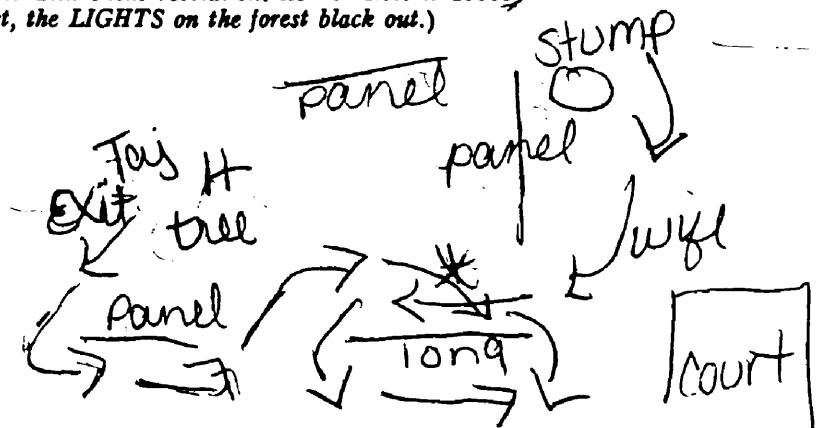
Taj looks at Husb.

Taj to *

X to Husb

Taj exit →
See below

Screaming all the way
CUT #
ref. to log
DC to log



(Simultaneously, the LIGHTS come up on the Police Court as the MEDIUM screams convulsively and, with a motion as if thrusting a sword into herself, pitches forward on her face. [SOUND CUE #

A lump rose to my mouth, but I felt no pain. Only a coldness creeping along my fingers—and a thin mist gathering around me. Everything was silent. Not a single bird-note in the sky, not a leaf moving. Only a lonely light lingered in the grove and on the mountain. In the stillness, I lay quietly. By and by the light grew fainter, till the bamboo and cedars were lost to view. Then someone seemed to approach softly. Who? I tried to see—but the darkness was too heavy. Someone—that someone's hand—grasped the sword in my breast and drew it out slowly. The lump in my mouth rose up to end my breath—and I sank down, down into the blackness of space.

WOODCUTTER'S VOICE. (In the darkness, violently.)
It's a lie! A lie!

(There is a crash of THUNDER as the LIGHTS come up quickly on the Rashomon Gate, revealing the PRIEST and the WIGMAKER staring at the WOODCUTTER, who has sprung to his feet.)

WOODCUTTER. His whole story is a lie! He didn't kill himself! He was— (He stops as he realizes what he's saying.)

WIGMAKER. (Rising.) He was—what? (As the WOODCUTTER turns away, mopping his brow nervously.) Why are you sweating so? (The WOODCUTTER stops mopping abruptly.) Could it be that you have some little morsel you're not sharing with us?

WOODCUTTER. No. I—I don't know anything. (He meets the PRIEST's searching eyes, avoids them quickly.)

WIGMAKER. (Grinning.) Just that a dead man lied. Only that.

Scene 2C

over
back
upon
knees

+ behind screen
clear sword #122

ext.

Scene 3

see ei

capable

Wo

Wi

X 1 step
OR

turn
back

back on haunches

hand
out

stands turns away

X on step to
back of Priest

X 1 step toward
looks at Pr.

~~(The PRIEST gets slowly to his feet, his eyes never leaving the WOODCUTTER.)~~

WOODCUTTER. I don't know—maybe he didn't lie—
(He starts away.)

PRIEST. (To the WOODCUTTER.) It is you who are lying.

WOODCUTTER. (Stopping and turning back.) I swear—

PRIEST. You swear too easily. Now—and in the Court today. (As the realization unfolds.) But you did not find a dead man—you saw him alive—and the bandit and the woman.

WIGMAKER. (Delighted.) He must have seen the whole thing!

PRIEST. (Crossing to the WOODCUTTER.) Why? Why didn't you tell them at the Court yesterday? (The WOODCUTTER meets the PRIEST's relentless gaze. Then, slowly, his shoulders sag, his lips tremble.)

WOODCUTTER. I'm—a poor man—

PRIEST. Is truth a luxury for the rich?

WOODCUTTER. I—I didn't want to get involved.

PRIEST. Involved? But you are involved! If not by your conscience or love of truth, then out of pure selfishness. Every time justice blunders, it is you who cries out for mercy, who rots in every jail, who hangs on every rope! What kind of fool are you that could unravel this whole web of dishonor and deceit, and did not speak out? Whatever their motives, one of those three—at least one of them—was telling the truth!

(There is a low rumble of THUNDER. [SOUND CUE # 38.]

WOODCUTTER. (Moving away from him.) No—(He comes face to face with the WIGMAKER.)

WIGMAKER. No? (The WOODCUTTER turns away from him.)

PRIEST. (Staring at him.) What do you mean?

turns away

turns to P

Wo looks down

Sits on step
kicking feet in
gill

looks up
at P

P hand on wo
should

To Woodie

WOODCUTTER. (*He turns, pained, reluctant.*) None of their stories was true. They lied—all of them.

(*The PRIEST stands looking at him, stunned. The WIGMAKER looks from one to the other, then slowly bursts into mounting sardonic laughter. The WOODCUTTER stands, apologetic, miserable.*)

WIGMAKER. Oh, my poor sides! That's one of the best jokes that's been played on me since my mother bore me. (*The PRIEST crosses abruptly away from them both.*) The way he sat there all this time with a face as blank as the moon's—

WOODCUTTER. I told you—I didn't want to get— (*He breaks off guiltily, glancing toward the PRIEST.*)

WIGMAKER. Say it. You didn't want to get involved.

WOODCUTTER. I was wrong.

WIGMAKER. Why? Your first thought was for your own skin—nothing wrong with that. As for Justice, it'll blunder no matter what you do. So just trust your own good sense and keep out of its way.

PRIEST. (*Turning.*) Leave him alone!

WIGMAKER. What are you offering him that's any better? Have you ever rotted in one of those prisons—or felt the cold point of the policeman's sword at your throat? Yes, courage is an easy word—in the sanctuary of the Temple garden.

PRIEST. I want no sanctuary!

WIGMAKER. What do you want? (*As the PRIEST looks at him, at a loss.*) You can't even look at the dirty face of the world you live in without wanting to run from it. Or accept the familiar fact that three people told lies in a Police Court yesterday. (*With mock sympathy, as the PRIEST turns away.*) I know—it's not pleasant, when you're sleeping, to have the pillow kicked from under your head.

PRIEST. There must have been some reason—

WIGMAKER. But it's so simple. Everyone tells what he wants the world to believe.

Priest
looks
down

Pause

turns

for
line then back

PRIEST. No. There must be a better answer.

WIGMAKER. (*Shaking his head.*) Still hoping for some heavenly hocus-pocus to turn the stink into incense. (*Then.*) ~~You were running away holy man.~~ Well, keep running, I tell you. Don't wait for the miracle.

PRIEST. (*There is a moment, then he turns and stares at the WIGMAKER penetratingly.*) Maybe the miracle is here—now. (*As the WIGMAKER looks at him blankly.*) Maybe it's you.

WIGMAKER. Me?

PRIEST. The rain—holding us here at the Rashomon Gate. Having to tell again—to you—the whole horrible tale. And out of your contempt and mockery, uncovering the truth—(*Looking toward the WOODCUTTER.*)—at last.

(*The WIGMAKER follows his gaze to the forlorn figure of the WOODCUTTER who doesn't meet their eyes.*)

WIGMAKER. ~~At last!~~ The divine mouthpiece! (*He laughs sardonically.*) ~~This is your moment, my friend.~~ The hand of Buddha guides your lips!

WOODCUTTER. No, I—

WIGMAKER. (*With mock severity.*) Speak up! One doesn't turn his back on Heaven's bidding.

(*The WOODCUTTER looks over at the PRIEST helplessly.*)

PRIEST. (*Gently.*) Never be afraid to speak the truth.

WOODCUTTER. (*There's a long moment as he wets his lips. Then he nods.*) All right—I'll tell you. — ~~Sits~~

WIGMAKER. Aah— (*He settles himself for the tale.*)

WOODCUTTER. (*Taking a deep breath.*) I was going through the woods, and—I found this woman's traveling hat—

WIGMAKER. A sedge hat with a veil—we know. And then—?

WOODCUTTER. And then—I heard sounds. So I stole up closer and peered out from behind a bush. The husband was still alive. He was tied to a tree ~~stumps~~

stand

up step over

shoulder

hand wood shoulder

X back
P

Woody D

standing gest up
heaven

wood
turns

Sits

HIT out

by the

had 2 sons

hus s-gcd

hus set days

by tree

w z fan

Wi

X

Wo

WIGMAKER. And the wife?

WOODCUTTER. She was—(Apologetically.) fixing her hair.

WIGMAKER. (Incredulously.) Fixing her hair? (To the PRIEST, after a moment's reflection.) Of course. What else would a woman be doing? (Turning back to the WOODCUTTER.) And Tajomaru—?

WOODCUTTER. He was—on his knees.

WIGMAKER. On his knees? (As the WOODCUTTER nods.) Oh, I'm going to like this story! Tajomaru the Terrible on his knees—!

[[SOUND CUE # 39.] He laughs, relishing it. As he does, the LIGHTS fade out on the Rashomon Gate and come up on the forest, revealing the tableau of TAJOMARU kneeling beside the WIFE, looking on helplessly as she sits on the ground combing and arranging her mussed hairdo. Her face is averted from him in wordless pique. The HUSBAND is bound and gagged in the bamboo stump.)

TAJOMARU. [FADE # 39.] Please— (He reaches out to touch her—thinks better of it.) I'm sorry. (When she just goes on fixing her hair, he moves around on his knees, trying to face her.) How many times can I say it? I'm sorry, I'm sorry. (She turns her face away from him, leaving him staring at the back of her head again.) Can't you understand? All my life—in here—(Taps himself on the temple.)—I've carried around someone like you. When I was a boy, I used to stare at the great ladies passing in their carriage-chairs. Once, one of them dropped her fan and I picked it up for her. Her hand was like a toy—with polished nails that curved—like yours—(He touches her hand reverently. She pulls it away.) Look—I, Tajomaru, known and feared throughout half the country—I'm on my knees, I'm begging you. Please come away with me.

WIFE. Leave me alone. —turns L

TAJOMARU. (As she continues fixing her hair, he

W: P
X
W: WO

Scene 4

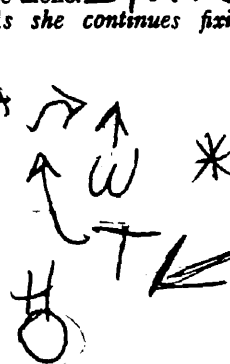
T on knees

stands

To
Knees

Taj crawl around
to face W
W falls R

crosses
around R
to *



~~spring to his feet, frustratedly.~~ What is it? That I'm a bandit? All right—I give it up. ~~(As she gives him a disparaging glance, he holds up a hand.)~~ I promise. And I always keep a promise. Ask any beggar or thief and they'll tell you—Tajomaru always keeps a promise.

WIFE. ~~(Disinterested.)~~ Go away.

TAJOMARU. ~~(Getting more desperate, he squats down beside her.)~~ Is it money? I've got piles of it, hidden away in places all over the forest. Just come with me and I'll show you things to make your mouth water—silks, jade, ivories, jewels—! ~~(She has stopped fixing her hair and is listening.)~~ Remember three years ago when Lord Uji's daughter disappeared on the highway with all her dowry? ~~(Her head turns slowly.)~~ There's one emerald as big as my fist. ~~(He holds out his fist—she stares at it, eyes wide as saucers, mesmerized.)~~ I can just see how it would look, there, in the hollow of your neck—~~(The "emerald" is moving toward the hollow of her neck. Almost there, it suddenly becomes a fist again.)~~

WIFE. ~~(Shrinking away.)~~ Don't touch me!

TAJOMARU. ~~(He is bewildered. Then, he claps himself on the forehead.)~~ What an idiot! How could I expect a lady like you to dirty herself with stolen money and jewels. ~~(He paces back and forth, the next decision facing him squarely. He struggles against it—finally submits to the inevitable.)~~ All right, then, if that's what it has to be, I'll do it. I'll go to work! ~~(He paces again, eagerly.)~~ Yes, by the dragon's teeth, I'll get a cart and pull it through the streets. I'll sweat, I'll grow calluses—but I'll make you happy, if you'll be my woman.

WIFE. ~~(She looks at him disdainfully. Rising, she arranges the folds of her kimono.)~~ How can you even suggest anything like that?

TAJOMARU. ~~How?~~ ~~(He moves to her on his knees.)~~ Because I want you so much, I—~~(He climbs up her as she tries to send him off.)~~ Let me kiss you again—let me show you—!

WIFE. ~~(Struggling against his lips.)~~ No—don't—stop it—! ~~(Suddenly she gives him an unladylike shove. He~~

X DR to STUMP Turn to W.

X 2 Steps toward

X to W'S DR
Squats

moves L

X DL
Paces R
turns to W

X to K

pull kimono
 stumbles back, his hand which was holding her kimono accidentally ripping it. She stares at the ugly rent, horrified.) My kimono!

TAJOMARU. (With strained patience.) I'll get you a new one—

WIFE. Look what you've done!

TAJOMARU. I'll get you ten kimonos!

WIFE. Only the second time I've worn it—

TAJOMARU. (Bursting.) Hell take your kimono! (As she looks at him, startled.) Yes, that's what I said—hell take it! And hell take you! (Taking a step toward her.) I'll beat you—I'll kill you—if you don't do what I say!

WIFE. You wouldn't dare! (Then, hopefully.) Would you? (He draws his sword menacingly. The WIFE's cheeks flush with pleasurable excitement as her eyes survey this forceful, predatory male animal before her. Then, slowly, she draws her fan from her belt. It flutters to her face, her eyes above it—female, provocative for the first time.) What you're asking is unreasonable. How can I do what you say?

TAJOMARU. Huh?

WIFE. A wife's duty is to her husband.

TAJOMARU. Oh. (An idea forms. He crosses to the HUSBAND.) All right, then I'll kill him. (He raises his sword as the HUSBAND wriggles and gurgles in protest.)

WIFE. No—don't!

TAJOMARU. (Frowning.) It's the easiest way.

WIFE. A lady isn't won by "the easiest way." She only prizes a man who's ready to fight for her.

TAJOMARU. (It had never occurred to him.) Fight? You mean—duel? (Abruptly, the WIFE runs to her HUSBAND and cuts his bonds with her dagger.) Wait—don't! What are you doing? (Apprehensively.) I don't want to play fancy games with a samurai.

WIFE. (Stepping back, a note of anticipation in her voice.) Now—it's up to both of you.

(She watches expectantly as her HUSBAND removes the rope from around him and the gag from his mouth.

Stand
 1 step toward W
 hold sword out to W
 tap sword
 back + open
 sword up
 look at W
 hand up
 fan can't

pull kimono
 pick up sword + stand

back + open
 looks at H
 then quickly away 1 step
 X R Z pace DL

X rest way to H

Steps backward 3 steps

counters back 2-3 steps
 TAJOMARU takes a defensive grip on his sword hilt, backing away warily.)

HUSBAND. (Rising, adjusting and brushing off his robe.) You can put that sword away. (As TAJOMARU gazes at him.) Don't worry, I'm not going to cut you down.

TAJOMARU. Cut me down?

HUSBAND. I have no intention of engaging in a duel with you. The sword of a samurai is reserved for nobler causes. It is a weapon of honor.

WIFE. What about—my honor?

HUSBAND. You don't even know what the word means.

WIFE. But—I've just been raped!

HUSBAND. (A snort of disbelief.) Ha!

WIFE. I struggled—I was overcome—

HUSBAND. (Scathingly.) My dear wife, I may have been gagged, but I wasn't blindfolded.

WIFE. There was nothing I could do!

HUSBAND. Naturally—being what you are.

WIFE. (The veneer of the "lady" is dropping off fast.)

What do you mean—what I am?

HUSBAND. You just cut my bonds with your dagger. Why didn't you drive it into your throat instead? That's what a woman of true nobility would have done, to wipe out her disgrace.

WIFE. I see. That's what a woman of nobility would have done. But, I, being what I am—

HUSBAND. What you are and what you always will be—a kitchen maid's daughter—a slut! (TAJOMARU stares at him, aghast.)

WIFE. So that's my reward—for all my faithful devotion!

TAJOMARU. (Stunned.) Kitchen maid's daughter? (They ignore him completely.)

HUSBAND. (A bitter laugh.) Devotion! Do you think I'm a child? All those smiles at any man who crossed our threshold. You weren't even skillful enough to conceal

turns to her

hand on hilt

*turn to W
step cross to W
1 step
cross to W*

turns DL to her

X 2 steps DC

them behind your fan. And the little sighs in the darkness of our garden—the whispers behind the screens—

WIFE. (*Injured.*) What whispers?

HUSBAND. Oh, you can stop playing the lady now. I'm your husband, remember? I know where you came from and what you are. And I've tried all this time to ignore it and, somehow, to save face. — ~~skip as~~

WIFE. (*Shrilly.*) Face—face! It's all you ever think about!

HUSBAND. I should have thought about it before I married you.

WIFE. You boor—you snob!

TAJOMARU. (*Suddenly.*) Oh, be quiet, both of you! (*They stop and look at him. He surveys them distastefully—viciously swats a mosquito on his neck.*) How did all this start, anyway? (*Remembering, resentfully.*) That breeze. I'd still be asleep by the roadside if not for that stinking breeze. (*Sheathing his sword.*) Let's forget the whole thing. (*He starts off, but the WIFE runs after him.*)

WIFE. Wait—don't go! How can we forget it?

TAJOMARU. I've forgotten it already. (*He starts to go again, but the WIFE catches his arm.*)

WIFE. You can't leave us here like this—you can't!

TAJOMARU. (*Disengaging his arm.*) Stop following me! I hate being followed.

HUSBAND. Leave him alone! Haven't you disgraced yourself enough? (*The Two MEN start away from her in opposite directions. She looks helplessly from one to the other, then sinks to the ground, sobbing—her first genuine tears. The Two MEN stop and turn, then slowly come back and stand looking down at her.*) Oh, stop that whimpering.

TAJOMARU. Women always cry.

HUSBAND. She's just wasting all those tears on me. Maybe she thinks you can be fooled by—

TAJOMARU. Me? Not any more.

HUSBAND. It was her face that trapped me. I thought I could make something of her, but— (*He shrugs.*)

turn back to W

X to H

skip as

raped R cross

Turns
to H

Pause

X toward
U Court

TWH
Facing
DC

H X UL

TX UR

TAJOMARU. Well—you can always put her back in the kitchen.

WIFE. (*Springing to her feet.*) Kitchen! (*The explosiveness of her action makes the TWO MEN take a backward step.*) Kitchen maid's daughter! Yes, that's what I am! But one thing you learn in the kitchen is to recognize the smell of—(*At both of them.*)—garbage!

HUSBAND. Hold your tongue!

WIFE. (*Turning on him.*) My dear, gallant husband! All that noble talk about your noble sword! Everyone knows a samurai has the right to destroy anyone for the most trifling offense. And what has this man done to you? Overpowered you, bound and gagged you, violated your wife before your very eyes! And your reply to all this? You draw yourself up and order me to drive the dagger into my throat! (*With crushing contempt.*) I thought I was giving you one last chance to be a man. But I should have known better. I've lived with you, slept with you, felt you tremble in the night and held your head while you vomited before you rode off to battle in glorious splendor. Yes, we both know why you won't fight. You're a coward—(*Shrilly.*) Coward—coward—coward!

TAJOMARU. (*Repelled by her outburst.*) That's enough!

WIFE. Enough? (*Turning to him.*) Who says enough?

TAJOMARU. Tajomaru!

WIFE. (*She measures him.*) Ah, yes—Tajomaru the Terrible—(*Moving toward him.*) For years, I thrilled to the tales of your romantic escapades, your daring, your savage strength. (*Surprised at these words, TAJOMARU begins to preen.*) And for a moment, I thought it might be true. I half hoped you were the one who would beat me, fight for me, tear me away from this stupid life I've been living. But, no—(*She moves closer to him.*) You were ready enough to murder my husband when he was bound and gagged. But when I untied him your burning passion for me vanished—and you can't wait to vanish after it. You're no better than he is—just a small,

looks up

stands 1 step

facing them

X → SL husband

1 step down

turns

1 step away/coward

X → SR Taj

turned
2 steps

turn

cheap imitation of yourself, a reputation without a body
—a nothing!

(She spits full in his face. Slowly, darkly, TAJOMARU wipes his cheek. Then, abruptly, he shoves her aside so violently that she crashes back against a tree with an audible gasp. Glaring at her, he slashes the air ferociously with his sword a few times, testing the blade. Then he wheels toward the HUSBAND. The WIFE, too, turns toward the HUSBAND. There's an expectant moment.)

HUSBAND. *(It's been rankling all this time.)* Vomited, did I!

Fight

(Turning toward TAJOMARU, he also tests the blade of his sword, slashing the air with great style. The WIFE smiles with triumphant satisfaction as the TWO MEN assume en garde positions. For a few moments, the air is filled with shouts and slashes of swords as they swing away with great ferocity—though never coming close enough to touch blades. At last, however, they are forced to approach each other—slowly, cautiously—their extended swords trembling slightly. As they get closer and closer, the WIFE's satisfaction changes to apprehension—until, when the tips of their swords finally touch, she lets out a frightened screech, so startling the two tense MEN that they spring away from each other. Recovering, they glare at her with some annoyance. The TWO MEN now circle around each other warily, again going through an elaborate series of feints without coming in actual contact. After a while, TAJOMARU stops, a bit winded, and lowers his sword.)

TAJOMARU. Well, why don't you attack?

HUSBAND. Why don't you?

(TAJOMARU wipes his nose with his sleeve. Then suddenly

he takes a single, mighty leap toward his adversary, swinging a single, mighty blow while roaring out a fierce animal-like sound. It looks very impressive but achieves nothing since the HUSBAND simultaneously takes a mighty leap backward. In retaliation, the HUSBAND attacks with a magnificent and highly skilled set of fencing figures. But TAJOMARU retreats without the least concern for good swordsmanship or dignity. And they still have not managed to touch each other. The WIFE, who has retreated behind a tree, has been peering out at the progress of the "duel." As the bloodless pantomime continues, she emerges slowly from her position of safety.)

(Noticing her.) Don't stand in the open like that!

TAJOMARU. Get behind a tree! You might get hurt!

WIFE. *(Scathingly.)* That's more than I can say for either of you! [SOUND CUE # 40.]

(She moves back among the trees as the MEN look after her sheepishly. Then they turn and spring toward each other with more genuine fury, and this time the forest is filled with the clanging of sword against sword as the character of the duel changes to one of grim reality. Abruptly, TAJOMARU swings a wild blow at the HUSBAND's legs. The latter just manages to vault over the whistling sword and aims a return slash at TAJOMARU which misses but cuts through the rope-belt holding the lower part of TAJOMARU's kimono tied about his middle. TAJOMARU grabs and holds up the kimono with his free hand and continues the duel—but it slips between his legs now and then, tripping him. The HUSBAND, sensing his advantage, presses the attack even more vigorously, in and out among the trees and bamboo patches—TAJOMARU defending himself desperately, resorting to every foul trick he knows. And he knows quite a few. Suddenly, while retreating around a tree stump, TAJOMARU turns and brings his sword straight down with a vicious grunt, in a blow aimed

to split his opponent's skull. But the HUSBAND jumps aside and TAJOMARU'S sword splits only the air and embeds itself deeply in the tree stump. TAJOMARU tugs frantically but the sword won't come loose.)

HUSBAND. (*Triumphantly.*) Hah!

TAJOMARU. (*Holding up a hand, as the HUSBAND advances on him.*) Wait—give me a chance— (*But the HUSBAND advances relentlessly. TAJOMARU backs away.*) You can't kill an unarmed man—you can't! (*As the HUSBAND comes toward him, sword held ready for the final thrust, TAJOMARU falls backward and tries to grovel away.* [CUT # 40.]

HUSBAND. Tajomaru the Great, your time has come!

TAJOMURA. (*Green with fear.*) No—no—NO!

(*He threshes about, kicking wildly and throwing handfuls of leaves and dirt at the HUSBAND to disconcert his aim, all the while whimpering in terror.* [SOUND CUE # 41.] *As a rain of dirt momentarily blinds the HUSBAND, TAJOMARU leaps up and clutches his upraised sword-arm. In the frenzied grappling that ensues, the sword flies out of the HUSBAND'S hand and into a clump of bushes. Desperately, disengaging himself, the HUSBAND wheels and disappears into the bushes to retrieve his sword. TAJOMARU scrambles back to the stump and tugs again at his embedded sword—but it stubbornly refuses to come loose. He turns in time to see the HUSBAND cautiously stealing out from among the bushes, sword in hand. Frantically, he picks up another handful of dirt and throws it at the HUSBAND, who stumbles blindly backward into the bushes. There's a chilling cry from the HUSBAND as he falls. With a mighty pull, TAJOMARU finally frees his sword and turns to defend himself. The WIFE, who has been following the progress of the encounter from various vantage points, watches with tense expectancy as the bushes*

slowly part and the HUSBAND staggers into momentary view. His sword is impaled deeply in his breast. The WIFE gasps. [FADE # 41.]

HUSBAND. ~~I-I feel~~ (A pathetic look of surprise on his face, he falls backward into the bushes, out of sight. [RAISE # 41.]

(Slowly, the WIFE moves over to where she can look down at the body of her HUSBAND. Then she turns her eyes toward TAJOMARU. Exhausted, unable to speak, he drops his sword and starts to stagger toward his prize, arms outstretched. But as he does, a wave of revulsion sweeps over her. She backs away from him with a sound of horror and disgust—turns and runs headlong into the forest. TAJOMARU tries to follow, but after a few steps he sinks to his knees—stares dumbly off in the direction in which the WIFE disappeared.)

(The LIGHTS of the forest fade to a dim HALF-LIGHT on the figure of TAJOMARU as the LIGHTS on the Rashomon Gate come up fully. There, the RAIN has stopped, but the FIRE is still burning fitfully. The WIGMAKER is listening attentively as the WOODCUTTER finishes the story. The PRIEST, his head bowed, sits facing away from them both. [FADE # 41.]

WOODCUTTER. . . . I held my breath, hiding there behind the bush, afraid Tajomaru might hear. But then, when I thought I'd burst, he got up. (In the forest, TAJOMARU gets wearily to his feet.) He picked up his sword. (TAJOMARU does what the WOODCUTTER narrates.) And then—I still get chills when I think of it—he passed by me so close I could have touched him. I didn't move a hair—(TAJOMARU disappears in among the trees. The HALF-LIGHT of the forest fades out completely.)—not until the last echo of his footsteps died

Scene 5

whisper
line

Taj, w out

W_i $\frac{p}{x}$ W_o

away. Then I jumped up and ran as fast as I could—out of the forest—

WIGMAKER. Straight to the Police.

WOODCUTTER. Yes.

WIGMAKER. Only on the way you happened to forget part of the story.

WOODCUTTER. No, I didn't forget. I— (*Rubbing his forehead.*) I don't know—maybe I should have spoken up at Court, but—all those different stories—I began to doubt my own senses. I couldn't understand—I still can't understand—why they all lied.

WIGMAKER. (*Teasingly.*) Did they? (*The sound of the CROWS is heard again.* [SOUND CUE # 42.]

WOODCUTTER. They must have! I know what I saw with my own eyes.

WIGMAKER. Why should I trust *your* eyes any more than those of the other three? Like I told you—people see what they want to see and say what they want to hear. (*As the WOODCUTTER starts to protest, he holds up a hand, grinning.*) But don't worry—if I believed any story, it would be yours. Not because of you, but only because it has the smell of truth. It's disappointing, isn't it? You'd like to think people are big—big heroes, big villains, big anything. But no—this is the way they are—small, weak, selfish, cowardly—faithless— (*He looks at the PRIEST's back with a smile of triumph.*) There's your miracle, holy man.

(*The PRIEST's face is bleak, empty. Picking up his staff and pack, he moves toward the rear of the Gate, stands looking off down the road leading away from the city. The WOODCUTTER turns on the WIGMAKER angrily.*)

WOODCUTTER. Why do you keep chopping to bits everything that's good?

WIGMAKER. (*Starting to douse the fire.*) It's all in the way you look at it. Some people think trees are good—yet you chop them down. Me—I have nothing, I am

P stands,
gets staff +
pack from
R column

gest
to wo

starts toward fire, squats
throws dirt on fire

Wo stay
standing D

A out
near his sword

nothing—and I've long since given up deluding myself. To me, truth is a firefly—now you see it, now you don't. And lies—they're no more than the little bugs that go to bed with me. I swat them for amusement— (*With a shrug.*) It's the only form of cleanliness I can afford.

(*There's a sound suddenly, from somewhere in the back—the odd, choked sound of a BABY'S CRYING.*)
[SOUND CUE # 43.] *The three men turn, looking around questioningly.*)

WOODCUTTER. Listen! That's not a crow! (*The WIGMAKER runs off, disappearing behind some large beams.*)
What is it?

(*In a moment, the WIGMAKER returns, carrying a blanket-wrapped bundle.*) [FADE # 43 TO ONSTAGE SPEAKER.]

PRIEST. (*Dropping his pack and coming over.*) A baby!

WIGMAKER. They're always dumping them here. (*Examining the blanket.*) Look at this blanket. Wool—real wool. (*Quickly stripping the blanket off the BABY.*) It must be worth at least—

PRIEST. (*Outraged.*) What are you doing? Give me that child! (*He tears the Baby away from the WIGMAKER, who manages to hang on to the precious blanket.*)

WOODCUTTER. What a vile thing—stripping an infant! WIGMAKER. Someone's bound to do it. Why not me? [CUT # 43.]

WOODCUTTER. I ought to break your bones.

WIGMAKER. (*Moving away.*) Oh, stop being such a hero.

WOODCUTTER. You're just a ghoul—a ghoul!

WIGMAKER. (*Turning, stung.*) Then what would you call its parents? They had themselves a little pleasure, then dumped the consequences—like some rubbish. If I'm a ghoul, what are they?

X DC
top step

X mid step

U Right

takes baby
X R to Column

X DL a step

turn to Wood

WOODCUTTER. What do *you* know of parents and children?

WIGMAKER. (*With a shrug.*) What's there to know? Sometimes they throw you away—sometimes you throw them away.

WOODCUTTER. *Your mind is so twisted!* (*Crossing to look at the Baby in the PRIEST'S arms.*) Can't you see this isn't a newborn infant? It must be four or five months old. What agonies these people must have suffered—to abandon such a child!

WIGMAKER. (Pained.) Please—I've heard enough sad stories for one day.

(The BABY begins to whimper again. [SOUND CUE
44.])

PRIEST. It's shivering—

WOODCUTTER. It'll die of cold. (*Advancing on the WIGMAKER.*) Give me back that blanket! (*As the WIGMAKER ignores him, folding it deliberately.*) Give it back, I tell you! [CUT # 44.]

WIGMAKER. (*Dismissingly.*) Oh, go away—

(The WOODCUTTER tries to snatch the blanket away from him. They grapple for it—falling to the floor—struggling for its possession. The PRIEST takes a step toward them helplessly. With the child in his arms, there's nothing he can do.)

WOODCUTTER. (*As they scuffle.*) Let go of it!

WIGMAKER, ~~Get away!~~ Van 67 50

WOODCUTTER. Let go—or I'll—I'll call the Police!

WIGMAKER. Call them! Go ahead and call them! (*Struggling to disengage himself.*) There are—other things—they might like to know. About—you. (*The WOODCUTTER stops fighting—stares at him.*) That's right—you! (*Scrambling to his feet, still clutching the blanket.*) You'd better leave me alone. I've been very generous to you—so far.

WOODCUTTER. (*Uncertainly.*) Generous?

WIGMAKER. Very generous, my friend—my good, honest, self-righteous friend—(*Contemptuously.*)—considering that you're a lying hypocrite like all the rest of them! (*Backing off, as the WOODCUTTER springs to his feet.*) You may have fooled the Magistrate—but not me!

(*The WOODCUTTER stops in his tracks, his face going pale. The PRIEST looks from one to the other in bewilderment.*)

PRIEST. What are you talking about?

WIGMAKER. He knows well enough. Ask him—just ask him! (*The PRIEST looks at the WOODCUTTER, who doesn't meet his eyes. Pointedly, to the WOODCUTTER.*) Where is the husband's sword, that fancy sword with the silver handle? Tell me that. No one took it from the scene of the murder—yet the Police couldn't find it. What happened? Did it melt away? Was it swallowed up into the earth?

WOODCUTTER. I—don't know.

WIGMAKER. You don't know! (*To the PRIEST.*) Just look at ~~him~~ ~~himself~~. (*To the WOODCUTTER, relentlessly.*) What was it the Medium said?—"Someone approached softly—drew the sword out of the dead man's breast—even before he was cold—"

WOODCUTTER. (*Desperately, shaking his head.*) No—!

WIGMAKER. (*Cackly now, he pokes him in the chest with a bony finger.*) How much did you get for it? Plenty, I'll bet. And you call me a ghoul! (*The WOODCUTTER turns to meet the anguished, questioning eyes of the PRIEST. Suddenly, he wilts, his head dropping down against his chest. To the WOODCUTTER.*) You were so eager to spare his feelings, I thought I'd help you cover up. You know, as one thief to another. But that's what you get when you try to do someone a good turn. ([SOUND CUE # 45.] *The PRIEST has turned away, brokenly. The WIGMAKER moves to the rear of the Gate, looks off.*) Looks like a break in the storm. (*He turns*

point
at woodie

step down
1 step betw.

Wood backs to
Step, sits
looking down

Sneak up on W
Feign pulling sw
back DL corn

turn back to wo

P turns
up to sit on
top step

X R-peers out

back. The WOODCUTTER is slumped against a pillar.) Oh, don't take it so hard. (Friendlier now.) I once saw a painting—a man hanging by a rope over a precipice. On top were wild beasts ready to devour him if he went up. Down below lay a dragon waiting to catch him if he fell. And all the time a white rat, representing day, and a black rat, representing night, were gnawing away at the rope. (Patting him on the shoulder, encouragingly.) That's the way it is, my friend. So let's not argue about right and wrong, the few minutes we're dangling here. (He moves toward the rear of the Gate again, turns.) Anyway, my thanks to you—both—for such an entertaining afternoon. (Holding up the blanket.) And profitable, too. (He laughs, tucking the folded blanket into his shirt as he hurries away through the rear of the Gate and out of sight.)

(For a long while, the TWO MEN stand silently, not looking at each other. Then the PRIEST crosses to get his pack. As he bends to pick it up, the BABY begins to cry again. [SOUND CUE # 46.] He straightens quickly, shifting the BABY in his arms. The WOODCUTTER has raised his head and is watching as the PRIEST tries ineptly to comfort the infant with awkward pats.)

WOODCUTTER. (Coming over, hesitantly.) Please—(Holding out his arms.) Let me—

PRIEST. (Turning away, harshly.) Let you what? Strip off the rest of its clothes? [CUT # 46.]

WOODCUTTER. (Draws back, his lips trembling.) I know. And I don't blame you. Why should you trust me? But—(As always, the words come hard.) I have six of my own at home. Hungry, sometimes—cold, frightened. They cry, too. (The PRIEST turns back slowly, beginning to take in the meaning behind the words. Under his gaze, the WOODCUTTER lowers his eyes apologetically.) What can I say? (A helpless gesture.) A silver-handled sword can dry a lot of tears. (The BABY'S crying be-

to
aud.

X R
turns
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turn

X turns to wood
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moving toward
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P stands
X down to
step
looking
after wig

X to P
Turns R

Turn LC

comes more violent, choked. [SOUND CUE # 47.] The WOODCUTTER finds it impossible to do nothing. Tentatively, he reaches out his arms toward the child again. Please— (This time the PRIEST makes no move to stop him as he takes the baby. Expertly, yet tenderly, he puts it over his shoulder, patting and rubbing its back as he makes comforting little sounds. The BABY'S crying trickles off and stops. [CUT # 47.] The WOODCUTTER looks over at the PRIEST reassuringly.) ~~(He removes the baby from his shoulder and cradles it in his arms.)~~ It will be hard for you to travel—with an infant. The road is often steep—lonely— (Hesitantly.) Maybe—I could take it home with me. There's little enough, but— (Looking down at the baby, he smiles.) How much can such a small mouth eat? (The PRIEST stands looking at him, wordless suddenly in the midst of an immense, dawning comprehension. At his silence, the WOODCUTTER holds out the child.) I'm sorry—I shouldn't have asked.

PRIEST. No—keep it. (As the WOODCUTTER stares at him.) Take it with you.

WOODCUTTER. But—you heard it yourself—I'm a coward, a thief, a liar—

PRIEST. (Nodding.) You're many things. A man—like all men.

WOODCUTTER. (His eyes slowly fill with tears.) Then you—forgive me?

PRIEST. Forgive you? (Looking off toward the city.) I'm the one who must go back to be forgiven. I thought only of how much I could teach the people. (He looks at the WOODCUTTER.) But it is you who teach me.

WOODCUTTER. (Shaking his head dumbly.) I'm afraid I—I'm still too ignorant to understand.

PRIEST. (With a half-smile.) I thank Buddha for such ignorance. ([SOUND CUE # 48.] He bows respectfully. Embarrassed, the WOODCUTTER bows back.)

WOODCUTTER. (Peering off.) The rain has stopped. (As the PRIEST goes to pick up his staff and pack.) The

sun will soon dry the ground, the trees—(Looking around him.)—the Gate.

PRIEST. (Following the WOODCUTTER's eyes.) The Rashomon. [SOUND CUE # 49.] Somehow, it's no longer so fearsome—with all its crows and corpses and jackals. (Looking down at the baby.) Even out of its crumbling ruins can come—life. [SOUND CUE # 50.] (The TEMPLE BELLS sound the hour. As the WOODCUTTER looks off, the PRIEST understands.) It's late. They'll be looking for you at home.

WOODCUTTER. I'd better go. (The PRIEST smiles at him. The WOODCUTTER smiles back—then goes down the steps of the Gate. There he turns to look back at the PRIEST.)

PRIEST. And thank you. [RAISE # 50.]

(At a loss for words, the WOODCUTTER bows. The PRIEST returns the bow even more deeply. Shifting the baby in his arms, the WOODCUTTER turns and hurries away, disappearing into the forest. The PRIEST stands looking after the WOODCUTTER until he is out of sight. Then he turns, his face at peace for the first time since we've seen him. He glances off at the road he was heading for—turns forward and moves to the top of the steps. The air is clean and sweet after the rain. He takes a deep breath, hoists his pack over his shoulder—then starts back toward the Temple bells, toward the teeming city and his unfinished work.)

CURTAIN



clear sword, 2 sheaths, rope, bag & dagger